

THE *11. 2. 6.*
Truth of Christianity
DEMONSTRATED.
WITH A
DISSERTATION
CONCERNING
Private JUDGMENT and AUTHORITY.
To which is Prefixed
A
VINDICATION
OF *12 B. 9*
The Short Method with the DEISTS.
IN

Answer to a Book lately Publish'd with this Title.

[A Detection of the True Meaning and Wicked Design of a Book, Intituled, *A Plain and Easie Method with the Deists*. Wherein is Proved, That the Author's (Lesley) Four Marks are the Marks of the Beast, and are Calculated only for the Cause and Service of Popery. London, Printed and are to be Sold by B. Bragg, at the Raven in Pater-Noster-Row, 1710.]

By CHARLES LESLIE.

*Clarior e Tenebris.
Depressa Resurgit Veritas.*

LONDON Printed: and Sold by E. Pool at the Half-Moon under the Royal-Exchange, and G. Strahan at the Golden Ball, over against the Royal-Exchange in Corn-Hill. MDCCXI.

3

THE
 Tenth of Christendom
 DEMONSTRATED
 WITH A
 DISSERTATION
 CONCERNING
 The State of the Church and the World
 To which is added



...to which is added
 ...the State of the Church and the World
 ...the State of the Church and the World
 ...the State of the Church and the World

...the State of the Church and the World
 ...the State of the Church and the World
 ...the State of the Church and the World
 ...the State of the Church and the World

T H E
P R E F A C E.

When first I saw this Detection, I went to it with great Expectation, to see what cou'd be said against the four Marks set down in the Short Method, &c. But the Title Page calling them the Marks of the Beast, and Charging the Design to be Popish and Wicked, I concluded it to be Grub-street, Wrote by some Impotent Whigg or Dissenter, in Spite to the Author, rather to give him Ill Names, than to Answer his Arguments.

But when I had Read it over, I own it Confounded me! I was filled with Horror and Amazement, to see Christ our Lord not only Blasphemed but Ridiculed, and the Truth of His Facts and of the Gospel, put into a lower Class of Probability than the most Senseless Legends either of the Papists or the Heathens! Here the Cloven-Foot appear'd Notoriously, and shewed out of what Quiver this Envenomed Arrow came, even of an Inveterate and Malicious Deist, filled with all the Rage of Hell against the Glory of God Manifested in that Revelation He gave to the World for the Salvation of Mankind!

And it gave me a very Melancholy Reflection, to see the Spirit of Infidelity let loose amongst us, and of late Tears Appear Open and Bare Fac'd; and by this

The P R E F A C E.

Means to have made so many Profelyts from Christianity among all Orders and Degrees of Men; inso-much, That it is become a Recommendation, and Mark of Wit to be one of these Free-Thinkers; and all others are Loaded with the Contemptible Name of Priest-Ridden and Slavish in their Understandings.

For these Ends this Detection was Wrote. But (Blessed be God) so Poor and Mean, as to the Reasoning Part, that it must Confirm any Man of Sense much more in the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion; to see how Wretchedly Silly all these Efforts are which are made against it. For this Reason I thought to Neglect it, and let it Sink under its own Weight of Nonsense and Contradiction. But I was told that it had Effect with many, not only of the Unthinking and Lowest Size of Understandings, but with others of more Capacity, whose Prejudice and Inclinations made every thing of this Sort most Acceptable and Valuable to them. And that some had Boasted of it, not only as a very Shrewd but an Unanswerable Piece; against Priest-Craft and all the Fourb of Revelation, to use their own Expression, as they have given it us in Print.

This determined me to Write an Answer to the Detection. And in Thinking this Matter over again, I found ther were other Marks or Evidences for Christianity, very Material, besides those Four which I had set down in the Short Method with the Deists. Not that these Four do not Sufficiently Evince the Truth of Christianity, and Distinguish it from any False Facts ever were in the World: But ther are other Evidences of Christianity which no other Fact how True soever either has had, or can have. These add to the Evidence, tho' not to the Truth of Christianity. And it is Glorious to see this Fact of Christ stand Single in the Creation, with Evidence Peculiar to it Self Alone!

I have Answered the Detection by the first Four Marks only, because these are what he Undertook to Disprove. And I have put that Answer first by it self,

The P R E F A C E.

self, because I wou'd not Intermix it with that Demonstration of Christianity which follows, and would be much Interrupted, if the Discourse should Break off as frequently as the Answering the Detection upon every Particular would Require. And though the last four Marks which I have now Added to this Demonstration would at first Sight Overthrow all the poor Sophisms in the Detection, None of the Facts he Produces as a Disproof of the first four Marks, having the least Shadow or Pretence of coming up to the Evidence of any of the other Marks; yet these not being in his View when he Wrote the Detection, he might think he had Gain'd his Point against the first four Marks, and so Overthrown the Short Method; and put me to bring in fresh Succours for the Support of Christianity: But having Demonstrated the Truth of Christianity by the first four Marks, I now by the Others shew the Glory of it; which, as the Sun, not only Disperses the Darkeness of Errour, but Obscures all Inferior Truths, that, like the lesser Lights of Moon and Stars, Disappear at the Approach of this Superior Light, and have no Glory, by Reason of the Glory that Excellerh!

And here I bring in the Jews, to let them see how far the Evidence of the Fact of Christ Outshines that of their Moses, who has no Share in the vi. vii. and viii. Evidences here Produced for Christianity; which has likewise all the Other that are or can be Produc'd for Moses or the Law.

I have not made the Jew a Party in this Dispute, because indeed I could not find what to say for his Cause, supposing my self a Jew; which is the Method I take in Representing and Discussing the Opinion of my Adversary, to say all I can for it, as if it were Really my own Opinion. But in this Case, it was not in my Power to put any tolerable Answer in the Mouth of a Jew, unless I should make him totally give up his Cause; which in an Opponent would seem a Betraying it. There-

The P R E F A C E.

fore I have left it to Themselves, to say more on their own behalf than did Occurr to me, if they can find it out; for I think their Cause more Naked than even that of the Deists, because they must Run Counter to their own Principles, and overthrow all their Foundations, in Defending themselves against Christianity, which is Built upon them.

But in the Third Part of this Discourse, concerning private Judgment and Authority, I have Introduced the Jew as a Speaker, because though he has so very little to say against the Evidence of Christianity, upon the Foot of Reason, or of the Prophecies concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament: Yet if we put the Proof of Christianity, and the Truth of the Scriptures, upon the Authority of the Church, as is done in the Church of Rome; there the Arguments of the Jew seem to me Irrefragable against this Foundation of Christianity. And this is the clearest Manner wherein I can shew to a Sincere and Honest Roman Catholick the Prejudice which his Church has done to Christianity, in this New Topick she has taken up to Defend her Self against the Reformation, of Resolving our Faith into the Authority of the Church, and Denying us the Use of our private Judgment, or the most Flagrant Proofs in the World against such Authority!

But as I said before to the Jew, so I do now to the Roman-Catholick, That I have made his Cause my own, and Argued for it all that is Possibly in my Power. But not to Preclude him from offering whatever further may Occurr to him in Defiance of his own Tenet; which I shall be must Willing to Hear, and Promise to Consider it as Impartially as I can. Because it is for my own Sake, and I would not Pawn my Soul for my Party.

Whoever is in Earnest with Religion, would wish all the World of his Mind. And therefore as he is Zealous to Persuade others, so he ought to be Patient in bearing the Contradiction of those who Oppose

The P R E F A C E.

pose themselves; Instructing them with Meekness, while they shew any Docible Temper. And when this meets on both Sides, the Christian Church may have Hopes of Peace.

All I have Desired of the Roman Catholick in this Dissertation, is, To give us free Liberty of Reasoning together, and not to say, I have already Determined my self upon the Authority of the Church, and will Hear no more, nor Admit any Argument against it! I will not Suffer any Dispute concerning whatever the Church has Proposed to me as of Faith! It is in vain to offer to Shew a Man any thing, till first you have Persuaded him to open his Eyes. Yet I despair not, for Christ is the λόγος the Reason or Wisdom of God, and that Ray of it Communicated to us makes us Men and His Image, it is Part of our Nature, and we cannot Divest our selves wholly of it; for we must make Use of our Reason, in finding out Arguments why we should not make Use of it! And since Reason must be our Instructor, why should we Deny it to be our Guide? Why would we Exclude it in Religion, where we have the greatest Occasion for it, to See that we are not Missed? Must we be Sharp Sighted in our Temporal Affairs, and Carried Blind-fold as to our Eternal? Must we not Examine why we Believe in Christ, rather than in Mohomet? Why we are not Jews this Day, but Christians? Or do we take up our Religion by Chance, according to the Place where we were Born and Bred? And does not this befall most Men, by Stopping their Ears against Reason? Does God admit us to Reason with Him? Come now and let us Reason together, saith the Lord; does He Isai. i. 18.
Appeal to our private Judgment? He says, Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard; did He permit Abraham to Ar- Chap. v. 3.
gue with Him? Shall not the Judge of all the

The P R E F A C E.

Gen. xviii. 25. *Earth do Right? And shall Man say to us, you are not Allowed to ask us any Questions at all, but to Believe Implicitly whatever we Declare unto You?*

This is the Cause I have Undertaken. And how shall I not Hope that Reason will Prevail.

Christo duce, & auspice Christo.

From my Tusculum.

All Saints, 1710.

The Four Marks of the Truth of Facts, upon which the Short Method proceeds.

1. That the *Fact* be such, as that Mens *Outward Senses*, their *Eyes* and *Ears* may Judge of it.
2. That it be done *Publickly* in the Face of the *World*.
3. That not only *Publick Monuments* be kept up in Memory of it, but some *outward Actions* to be Performed.
4. That such *Monuments* and such *Actions* or *Observances* be *Instituted*, and do *Commence* from the *Time* that the *Fact* was done.

The

CONTENTS.

OF THE VINDICATION, &c.

- I.** **A**N Account of the Occasion of Writing the Short Method with the Deists. 1
- II.** The Issue of it with some Deists, to find some false Fact which had the Four Marks. 3
- III.** The Instances brought for this in the Detection. 4
1. Of *Æsculapius* being in a *Serpent*. *ibid*
 2. The Apparition of *Castor* and *Pollux*. 5
 3. Of *Sommonocodom*. 6
 4. Two Stories out of the *Legends*. The most *Ridiculous* of which he Prefers to any *Miracle* wrought by *Christ* or His *Apostles*. 10
 5. He brings in the Subject of *Government* by Head and Shoulders. And *Rages* most *Furiously* against the *Clergy*. 11
 6. Of the *Pied Piper* at *Hamel*. 13
 7. Of *Priest-Craft* in *Perfection*. 14
 8. He *Postpones* his *Proofs* for *Christianity*. 15
 9. He tells, in the Person of a *Deist*, how he cou'd Prove the *Scriptures* both *Spurious* and *Incredible*. *ib.* His Business lately in *Holland*, with *Toland*, and *Le Clerc*, &c, To find a *MSS.* against *Christ*, and shew the *Apocryphal* Books of the *New Testament*. 16

CONTENTS.

- IV. *Le Clerc's Arguments against the Method with the Deists.* 17
1. His Design is against *Christianity* ib.
 2. He too Argues from the *Revolution.* 18
 3. His Words at large. From which the *Detection* has Borrowed all his Arguments. ibid
 4. I put not the Issue of *Christianity* upon the *Four Marks.* 21
 5. Nor Reject stronger *Proofs*, where they may be had. ibid
 6. An Answer to his Argument from the *Rejoicings* of the *Jews at Pharos.* 22
 7. From the *Greek Mythologists*, and the *Fasts* of *Ovid.* 23
 8. He owns ther was no *History* of the *Beginnings* of these *Fasts.* Yet ther is. ibid
 9. False *Stories* may be Believed. 24
 10. He joins with the Book of the *Rights.* They Com- mend each other. 25
- V. *The Observer* puts in his Oar. 27
1. He Vindicates the *Detection* against the *Short Method.* ibid
 2. His *Five Proofs* of *Christianity.* ibid
 3. He argues only from the *Doctrine*, which he likewise Mistakes. 29
- VI. A Conversation with some Dissenting *Preachers* upon the most proper *Tools* to Prove *Christianity.* 30
- VII. A *Test* of the *Veracity* of the *Detection.* 33
-
- THE Letter about *Sommonocodom.* 35

The

The CONTENTS.

OF THE

Truth of Christianity Demonstrated, &c.

1. **T**HE miserable State of the *Deists*, according to the utmost that themselves propose. 49
2. Their Notion of the Holy Scriptures, the same as of the *Legends*. 52
3. The *Facts* prove the *Doctrines*. 55
- Eight *Evidences* as to the *Facts* in the Holy Scriptures. *ibid*
- I. They were such of which *Mens* outward *Senses* cou'd Judge. *ibid*
- II. Done Publickly in the Face of the World. 56
- III. Perpetual *Institutions* in Memory of them. *ibid*
- IV. Which *Commenc'd* from the Time of the *Facts*. *ibid*
- V. The *Bible* a *Law* as well as a *History*. 60
- Wherein of the *Various Lessons*. 64
- VI *Prophecies* of the *Messiah*. 65
1. He was the *Expectation* of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Known by the Name of the *East*. 67
2. The *Wise Men* coming from the *East*. 69
3. Of the *Popish Legends*. *ibid*
4. Many things *True* which have not all these *Evidences*. 70
5. The *Truth* of the *Wise-Men* and the *Star* Vindicated. 71
6. *Chalcidius* Speaks of this *Star*, and makes these

CONTENTS.

these <i>Wise-Men</i> to have been <i>Chaldeans</i> .	73	13. The Impossibility of a Concert in this Matter.	84
7. The <i>Eastern Tradition</i> of the <i>King</i> of the <i>Jews</i> carry'd the <i>Wise-Men</i> to <i>Jerusalem</i> .	74	14. Much more of all the different <i>Ages</i> since <i>Adam</i> , as to the <i>Prophecies</i> of the <i>Messiah</i> .	85
8. The same <i>Tradition</i> among the <i>Romans</i> , as likewise from the <i>Sibyls</i> , &c. That He was to Come about that <i>Time</i> our <i>Saviour</i> was Born.	76	15. This a Stronger Proof than of what we See with our Eyes.	ibid
9. This made the <i>Senate</i> Decree the Destruction of all the <i>Children</i> Born that Year.	76	16. <i>Prophecies</i> of several Particulars in the Sufferings of the <i>Messiah</i> .	86
And caus'd <i>Insurrections</i> at <i>Rome</i> . <i>Virgil</i> Quotes this <i>Prophecy</i> .	78	17. <i>Prophecies</i> of things yet to Come.	89
10. Of the Authority of the <i>Sibyls</i> .	81	18. The <i>Prophecies</i> of the Destruction of <i>Jerusalem</i> .	90
11. A convincing Argument against the <i>Jews</i> .	82	19. And of the false <i>Christ</i> that should come.	91
12. As Strong against the <i>Deists</i> . The slaughter of the <i>Children</i> at <i>Bethlehem</i> was upon the same Design with the Decree of the <i>Senate</i> of <i>Rome</i> for destroying their <i>Children</i> .	83	20. And of the Propagation of the <i>Gospel</i> .	92
		21. Why some <i>Prophecies</i> are very Express, and others more Obscure.	94
		22. The Answers of the <i>Jews</i> to the <i>Prophecies</i> of the <i>Messiah</i> . Of the Scepter departing from <i>Judah</i> , and several other.	98

CONTENTS.

VII. Types of the *Messiah*. 112

1. *Sacrifices*. *ibid*

2. *The Pass-Over*. 115

3. *The great Expiatory Sacrifice, and the Scape Goat*. 116

4. *The Brazen Serpent*. 117

5. *Manna*. 118

6. *The Rock in the Wilderness*. *ibid*

7. *The Pillar of Fire. And the Cloud of Glory in the Temple*. *ibid*

8. *The Sabbath*. *ibid*

9. *Jerusalem and the Temple. By the Destruction which, the Sacrifices Ceas'd, and a Remarkable Prophecy was Fulfill'd*. *ibid*

10. *Which Shuts the Door against any future Messiah: As also another Prophecy of Jeremiah*. 121

11. *A wonderful Prophecy of the Dispersion and Preservation of the Jews*. 125

12. *No Messiah to come can Fulfil the Prophecies of Him*. 126

The Excuse of the Jews, that the Coming of the Messiah is Delay'd for their Sins. 127

13. *Personal Types of Christ. Adam. Enoch. and Elijah. Noah. Melchisedes. Abraham. Isaac. Jacob. Joseph. Moses. Joshua. Sampson. David. Solomon. (Janus) Jonah. The High-Priest*. 131

1. *These Types being Supported by the New Testament is a full Proof of them*. 140

2. *And more than any other Fact can now have*. 141

3. *And which grows Stronger every Day, instead of Decaying*. 142

VIII. *The Truth and Sincerity of the Prophecies of the Holy Scriptures*. 144

1. *This a good Evidence, tho it Amounted only to a Probability*. *ibid*

C O N T E N T S.

2. It is Impossible they should be *Deceiv'd* themselves, or *Deceive* others in the *Facts* they Related.

145

3. Their *Enemies* and *Persecutors* did not Deny the *Facts*, nor the *Apostates*.

146

4. The *Providence* that all *Civil Governments* were against *Christianity* for the First 300 Years

147

These *Evidences* Compar'd with those of

1. *Judaism*, before and since *Christ*.

ibid

2. *Heathenism*.

148

3. *Mahometism*.

151

1. The *Rapsody* of the *Alcoran*. And Monstrous Simplicity of their *Legends*.

152

2. The *Majesty* and Heavenly *Doctrine* of the Holy *Scriptures*.

153

3. The *Alcoran* Confesses to the Holy *Scriptures*.

154

And *Mahomet* Prefers *Christ* to himself.

154

4. *Mahometism* is *Arianism* Reviv'd, with

a mixture of *Judaism* and *Heathenism*. All which are given up by the *Deists*.

156

1. The Plea of *Natural Religion* set up by the *Deists*.

159

2. The *Reasonableness* and *Necessity* of *Revelation*. Own'd by the *Heathen*, particularly by *Plato*. With his *Prophecy* of *Christ* and His *Sufferings*.

160

3. All *Nations* were always Govern'd by *Revelation*, either *Real* or *Pretended*.

162

4. No *Revelation* ever given by *God* to the *World*, but that of *Christianity*. Of which all other *Religions* are but a *Corruption*.

163

5. Why so many *Unbelievers*, tho' the *Evidence* is so Plain.

164

6 They wou'd be thought *Brutal*, who should deny things of far less *Evidence*, and of no *Concern*.

166

7. The Case of *Miracles* Discuss'd.

170

8. Ther is a *Preparation* of the *Heart* Necessary to *Believing*.

175

9. A *Prayer* for the *Jews*.

179

THE

The CONTENTS.

OF

The Third PART,

CONCERNING

Private Judgment, &c.

I. **T**HE Importance
of the Subject.

181

II. The evil Conse-
quences of private
Judgment. *ibid*

III. The Consequences
of submitting absolute-
ly to Authority. 183

These Compared toge-
ther. 185

1. In the Gentiles. 186

2. In the Jews. 187

IV. The Stumbling-
Block of the Jews
was the Authority of
the Church. And the

Promises made to
Her. *ibid*

Both now taken up by
the Church of Rome. 188

V. The Advantage in
Both is to the Jews. 192

VI. The Promises in the
New Testament not
made to the Church
of Rome. 194

VII. She is not the Mo-
ther-Church. 195
Tell it to the Church
Explained. And Deut.
xvii. 197

VIII.

The CONTENTS.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>VIII. No Judge of Faith
but God. 198
<i>Exemplified in the se-
veral Articles of the
Creed. ibid</i>
<i>If the Church were
Judge of Faith, it
would set Her above
God. 199</i></p> <p>IX. We receive the Faith,
not from the Autho-
rity, but the Testi-
mony of the Church.
<i>ibid</i></p> <p>X. Who shall be Judge?
<i>To be Asked only in
Matters of lesser Con-
cern, not in the Faith.</i>
201
<i>No such Authority in
the Apostles or An-
gels of Heaven. 202</i></p> <p>XI. Why Christ came
in Opposition to the
Church, and all Hu-
man Authority. 204</p> <p>XII. The Canon of Holy
Scripture Settled by
the Testimony, not
the Authority of the
Church. 205
<i>Wherein of the Apo-
crypha. 206</i></p> | <p>XIII. The great Mistake
in Understanding the
Promises of God
made to His Church,
as if without any Im-
plied Condition on
Her Part. 208
<i>Whence the furious Zeal
of the Jews for their
Peculium. And of
Rome with less Pre-
tence. 210</i></p> <p>XIV. The Church has
Authority, even in
Matters of Faith. 211</p> <p>XV. The Extent of
that Authority. And
Fallability of the
Jewish Church. 213</p> <p>XVI. A short Test to
Determine the Mat-
ter. God is not O-
bliged to give Men
an Infallible Guide,
because not given to
the greatest Part of
Mankind. 220</p> <p>XVII. Application of
the whole, as to the
Pretensions of the se-
veral Churches, not
amongst us. 221</p> |
|--|---|

THE



THE
Short METHOD
WITH THE
DEISTS,
VINDICATED.

(I.)



Y Short and Easie Method with the DEISTS,
bears Date *July 17th*
1697. And was but
two Sheets of Paper,
being Wrote for the
Satisfaction of a Gentlewoman (tho' it is
Address'd as to a Man) who had been
Stagger'd with the Arguments of *Deism*
even to Distraction; for tho' (as she told
me) She was not come to be a down-
right

B

2 *The Short Method with*

right *Deist*, yet She was not able to Answer their Arguments, nor to Clear up the Matter to her own Mind ; and what had been so often Rung in her Ears, of the Story of *Christ* being but a *Fable*, like that of *Mahomet*, or the *Heathen Gods*, wou'd Dart into her Thoughts in the midst of her *Devotions*, even at the Holy *Sacrament* ; Which, said she, if *Christianity* be a Truth, seem'd to me to be *Blasphemous*, and that I was Provoking *God*, while I pretended to *Worship* Him. This at last Wrought so Powerfully with her, that She came to abstain from all *Prayers*, even in Private ; And was in a most Deplorable Condition, owning that she was often Tempted to Destroy her self, which she was afraid wou'd be the Issue. I found Discoursing with her had but little Effect, for in that violent Discomposure, she cou'd not give Attention, but wou'd fall out into terrible *Exclamations*, Wishing her self Dead, or that she had never been Born. I then Wrote this *Letter* to her, free from all Intricacies, and Suited to her Capacity ; and Prevail'd with her to Copy it in her own Hand, thinking that wou'd fix her Attention the more,
and

the *Deists*, Vindicated. 3

and Prevent those Wandering Thoughts which Interrupted her Consideration of what was offer'd to her in Discourse. And, by the Blessing of God, this had the desir'd *Effect*, for she came to Reason Calmly, and at last was fully Convinc'd, as She still Remains; and She was able to keep her Ground with the *Deists* by the *Four Marks*, which none of the *Stories* they told her of the Heathen Gods, of *Mahomet*, or the *Legends*, cou'd come up to. Some had the *first Mark*, some the *Second*, and some the *Third*, but all Stuck at the *Fourth*, none of them had All the *Four*. And it was by her Perswasion, and of some others to whom She shewed my *Letter*, that I was Prevail'd with to let it be made Publick. And it Meeting with a favourable Reception, I enlarged it to Four or Five Sheets in the next Edition. And took in the Case of the *Jews*, which made a larger Volume.

(II.) I had several Conferences with some *Deists* upon the Argument. And the Issue was, They were to find out some *Fact* that was *False* which had All the *four Marks*. And tho' they Nam'd many, yet none was found that

4 The Short Method with

wou'd bear the Test. Nor cou'd they find any Supposititious Book which had these *four Marks* for its Veracity, as the Holy *Scriptures* have. Which *Commenced* from the *Time* they Speak of, and were Written by the *Actors* of the *Facts* they Relate, or by *Eye* and *Ear-Witnesses*. And thus the Matter has Stood these 13 Years, till this *Detection* is at last come out, and like the *Mountain* so long with Child, has brought forth a *Mouse*!

(III.) His *Proofs* begin p. 14. And the first Instance is out of *Livy* of a Decree made at *Rome* for one Day's Supplication to *Æsculapius*, to remove a *Plague* was in the City.

1. Then he Quotes a very Modern Author *Freinsbemi*us who Wrote a *Supplement* to *Livy*, and there tells a strange Story of a *Serpent* that came into a Ship at *Epidaurus*, and was carry'd to *Rome*, where being Arriv'd it Swam into an *Island* in the *Tyber*, and was no more seen. And they supposing the Deity of *Æsculapius* to be in the *Serpent*, and that the God had Chosen this Place for a *Temple* to be built to him, did accordingly build a *Temple* in that *Island* for
Æsculapius

Æsculapius, and the Plague ceased. And he says *Freinsbemi* Quotes several *Authors* for this. And so he might. No doubt a *Story* may be Handed from one to another. But who was the Original *Author*? And what Cause of Knowledge had he? Was he an *Eye-Witness* of it? Or did he *Dream* it? Perhaps he had it from an *Old Woman* in a *Chimney-Corner*, or out of a *Romance*, or Fram'd it as such himself. Yet he has the Confidence to say, That this has all the *four Marks*!

But suppose this *Story* were True, what wou'd he make of it? Did this *Serpent* Speak, and Teach the World any *Doctrine* as Sent from *God*? Or was it to Vouch the *Mission* of any *Person* who Pretended to be so Sent? I think we need stay no longer with this.

2. His next is p. 19. Of two unknown *Young Men* who Charged on the Front of the *Roman Horse* against the *Latins*. And the same Night they two, or two such like, were seen at *Rome*, and told them the *Latins* were Routed. And the *Romans* fancying these to be *Castor* and *Pollux*, built a *Temple* to them, and appointed a yearly *Procession* in Memory of the happy Conclusion

6 The Short Method with

sion of that War with the *Latins*. To which I say,

1. That this is told by None who were *Eye-Witnesses*, or who liv'd near the Time.

2. Here is Nothing but the pure *Fancy* of the *Romans* that these were *Castor* and *Pollux*. For it is not said that these *two Men* told them so.

3. Suppose the *Fact* True, This was not to Confirm any *Doctrine*, or Vouch the Mission of any *Prophet* or *Teacher* as Sent from *God*.

If you say, That it was a Confirmation of the then *Roman Idolatry*, that *God* Suffer'd such a Wonderful thing to be done among them. It will not follow, for Greater *Wonders* than this *Apparition* (Suppose it True) were done by the *Magicians* in *Aegypt*, and by the *Devil* when he brought down *Fire* upon *Job's Cattle*. And this *Apparition* to the *Romans* was not out of the Power of the Evil *Spirits* to perform, if *God* so Permitted them. Of this see more in what is said hereafter upon the Head of *Miracles*, the last *Num.* 7. of this Book.

3. His next Instance is p. 25. of *Sommonocodom* now Worshipped in *Siam*. Where he draws a most *Blasphemous* Parallel

the *Deists*, Vindicated. 7

Parallel betwixt him and *Christ*, as to His *Birth*, and several Passages of his Life. For answer to this, I refer you to the *Letter* hereunto Annexed from an Ingenious Friend of Mine, whom I desired to search for Father *Tachard* and Mr. *Gervaise* Quoted for this Story in the *Detection*, I not having the Books, and not well able at this time to go about and look after them. There you will find that the *Siamese* do not Reckon this *Sommonocodom* as the Founder of their Religion. That they neither know *When* or by *Whom* the Book they have of him was Written. That they believe no *God*, but a continual Fluxation, and *Transmigration* of Souls from Eternity. That they have no certain Account or History even of their own *Kingdom* or their *Civil* Affairs. In short, That they are a most Stupid and Brutal People. And for the senseless *Stories* they have of their *Sommonocodom*, without the Appearance of *Truth* or any *Foundation* for them, you will see in the *Letter*. But from what they tell of *Sommonocodom*, his being Born of a *Virgin*, and forced to fly when a *Young Child* to another Country, from a *King* that would have Destroy'd him,

8 The *Short Method* with

and several other Passages of our Blessed Saviour's Life, it is Apparent that they have heard of the *Gospel*, or that *Christianity* was sometime in that Country, tho' it is now lost among them, as in other Places. But as to the *Author* of the *Detection*, he is desir'd to tell us *When* that *Book* which Relates the *Facts* of *Sommonocodom* was Written, and *Who* was the *Author* of it? Was he a Witness of the *Facts*? And has that *Book* been Extant ever Since? Till he can Answer these things, he cannot say it has the *four Marks* as our *Bible* has. But it shews what true Pains he has taken to Banter and Ridicule *Christianity*, in Picking up *Stories* from every Corner, which he thinks may Blast and Confound it. *The Lord rebuke him.*

He says, p. 24, 25. That this *Sommonocodom*, after a long Expectation of the whole Universe, was Born about 400 Years before our Blessed Saviour. For this he Quotes none of his *Authors*. It was a Stroke put in by himself, that he might make it a Parallel to what I mention in that Part I added to the *Short Method*, relating to the *Jews*, Sect. v. p. 30. &c. Concerning the General Expectation among the *Gentiles* from East to West, about this

the *Deists*, Vindicated. 9

this I proved, not from the Holy *Scriptures* only, but from the Best of the Heathen *Authors* themselves, from the *Sibyls*, and the *Decree* of the *Senate* of *Rome*, pursuant to them, and Grounded the Time of our *Saviour's* coming, of a *Jew* to be then Born, who should be Universal *King* of the whole Earth. And upon this general *Expectation* then Current among the *Romans*, as well as throughout all the *East*. Whence the *Magi* came to Worship this *King* newly Born. We have *Histories* of the Times 400 Years before *Christ*. And if ther was such a general *Expectation* of the whole *Universe* at that Time concerning *Sommonocodom*, as the *Detection* says, it is Strange that no *Author* in the whole *Universe* shou'd make the least Mention of such an *Expectation* of an Universal *Monarch* to be Born at *Siam*! Therefore till the *Detection* produces his *Vouchers*, and others besides the *Siamese*; who cou'd not Answer for the whole *World*, we must look upon this as a meer *Figment* of that *Author's* own Brains; and which has fully Discover'd the *Nonsense* and *Forgery* of his *Detection*. And shews how Hard it is for *Lies* to Imitate the *Truth*.

8 The *Short Method* with

and several other Passages of our Blessed Saviour's Life, it is Apparent that they have heard of the *Gospel*, or that *Christianity* was sometime in that Country, tho' it is now lost among them, as in other Places. But as to the *Author* of the *Detection*, he is desir'd to tell us *When* that Book which Relates the *Facts* of *Sommonocodom* was Written, and *Who* was the *Author* of it? Was he a Witness of the *Facts*? And has that Book been Extant ever Since? Till he can Answer these things, he cannot say it has the *four Marks* as our Bible has. But it shews what true Pains he has taken to Banter and Ridicule *Christianity*, in Picking up *Stories* from every Corner, which he thinks may Blast and Confound it. *The Lord rebuke him.*

He says, p. 24, 25. That this *Sommonocodom*, after a long Expectation of the whole Universe, was Born about 400 Years before our Blessed Saviour. For this he Quotes none of his *Authors*. It was a Stroke put in by himself, that he might make it a Parallel to what I mention in that Part I added to the *Short Method*, relating to the *Jews*, Sect. v. p. 30. &c. Concerning the General Expectation among the *Gentiles* from East to West, about this

the *Deists*, Vindicated. 9

this I proved, not from the Holy *Scriptures* only, but from the Best of the Heathen *Authors* themselves, from the *Sibyls*, and the *Decree* of the *Senate* of *Rome*, pursuant to them, and Grounded the Time of our *Saviour's* coming, of a *Jew* to be then Born, who should be Universal *King* of the whole Earth. And upon this general *Expectation* then Current among the *Romans*, as well as throughout all the *East*. Whence the *Magi* came to Worship this *King* newly Born. We have *Histories* of the Times 400 Years before *Christ*. And if ther was such a general *Expectation* of the whole *Universe* at that Time concerning *Sommonocodom*, as the *Detection* says, it is Strange that no *Author* in the whole *Universe* shou'd make the least Mention of such an *Expectation* of an Universal *Monarch* to be Born at *Siam*! Therefore till the *Detection* produces his *Vouchers*, and others besides the *Siamese*; who cou'd not Answer for the whole *World*, we must look upon this as a meer *Figment* of that *Author's* own Brains; and which has fully Discover'd the *Nonsense* and *Forgery* of his *Detection*. And shews how Hard it is for *Lies* to Imitate the *Truth*.

10 The Short Method with

4. He next comes to the Popish *Legends*, p. 30. and Quotes one E. W. who Wrote against Dr. *Stillingsfleet* for some *Miracles* Wrought by *Thomas Cantelupe* Bishop of *Hereford*. And some after he was Dead. The only One he Names is, p. 31. of a Child who fell from a Bridge belonging to *Conway Castle* in *Wales* into the Ditch 28 Foot under the Bridge and was taken up Dead, as was Supposed, but Recover'd upon Prayers to St. *Thomas Cantelupe*. Now I can tell him of a Man who fell from a much higher Place, and yet had no Hurt at all. Was not that a greater *Miracle*? But he goes on, and tells from this E. W. p. 31. 32. How the *Virgin Mary* appear'd to a Bishop of *Arras* with a burning Wax Candle in her Hand in the great Church before all the People. And that the Candle is still preserved there, and *Spends it self, yet loses Nothing*. That is (says he) like the *Bush* which *Moses* saw Burn, but not at all Consumed. Here you see the Man, and to what End he brings in all these *Stories*! He believes the one no more than the other! He says of that of the Candle, it is no very Difficult Matter to give a near Guess how this
Juggle

the Deists, Vindicated. II

Juggle was Contrived. And that of *Moses* he thinks was such another *Juggle*! But, Sir, cou'd *Moses* *Juggle* to make Six Hundred Thousand Men believe, That he led them through the *Sea* in the Manner he tells; That they were Fed with *Manna* from Heaven; That he brought *Water* out of the *Rock* before their Eyes to Quench their Thirst? Could *Christ* *Juggle* to make Five Thousand Hungry Men believe he had filled all their Bellies with five *Loaves* they saw in his Hands and two *Fishes*? That he had Raised *Lazarus* after being four Days in the Grave? Can all the *Miracles* of *Moses* and of *Christ* be *Juggled* off like that of the *Wax Candle*? Yes, you think so, and say, p. 38. " That " (Miracle) of *Arras* not only Exceeds " the four Marks, but Transcends any " Miracle that was Wrought by *Christ* " or his *Apostles*!

Can *Christian* Ears bear this *Blasphemy*! O thou full of all *Subtilty* and all *Mischief*, thou *Child of the Devil*, thou *Enemy of all Righteousness*, Wilt not thou Cease to Pervert the right Ways of the Lord?

5. This *Elymas* in the next Words falls a Raging with all the Malice of
Hell

12 *The Short Method with*

Hell against those who make use of *Revelation*, that is, of the Holy *Scriptures* in Matter of *Government*, Deducing it from *God*, as from the *Original*, and having his *Authority*, which is here call'd *Slavery* and *Popery*. And he says, " They both depend upon " the same *Principle* (that is, of *Revelation*) and whosoever is Capable of " Entertaining heartily any one of these " Notions, must necessarily fall at last " into the other." And I have Observ'd on the other Hand, That whoever is Capable of Entertaining heartily the Notion of all *Power* being in the *People*, and making Them the *Original* of *Government*, fall most Commonly, I will not say *Necessarily*, into the Other of *Deism*, so that they are almost Convertible *Terms*. For throwing off the *Authority* of *God* as to *Government*, leads Naturally to the Laying it aside in *Religion* too, if that may be call'd *Religion* which has not *God* for its *Author*. And for my Asserting the *Authority* of *God* in Both, he says, I am a *Papist* (Ridiculous!) and have a *Miscreated Understanding*. And p. 39. " These (*Priests*) are " the *Dogs* of *Hell*, that are let loose " from the *Infernal Regions*— These are the

“ the *Harpies* that Defile with their
 “ filthy Odious Gripes whatever was
 “ design’d by God or *Nature*, for the
 “ *Pleasure, Health, or Welfare* of the
 “ poor Subjected *Laity*. ” This is al-
 ways the Burden of the Song, O, these
Priests ! And you see in what a hand-
 some Manner he Treats them ! And
 how they would be Treated in *En-*
gland, if his *Principles* should Prevail !
 And they have sadly Prevail’d ! Pray
 God stop the Progress, and Raise *La-*
bourers will be Faithful in his *Vineyard* ;
 for the wild Boar of the Forest doth
 now Root it up, many *Foxes* Spoil
 the *Vines*, and all they that go by
 pluck off her *Grapes*.

6. He returns, p. 40. to give ano-
 ther Instance of a *Falsbood* that has all
 the *four Marks*, which is the known
 Story of the *Pyed Piper* at *Hamel*, who
 Piped a Hundred and Thirty Children
 out of Town, and Led them to a lit-
 tle Hill, in the Side of which a Wide
 Hole opened, into which they all went,
 and it Closed upon them again. But
 whether this Story be True or False,
 yet he cannot say it has all the *four*
Marks, for in the Relation which he
 sets down of it from *Verstegan*, it is
 told,

14 The Short Method with

told, p. 41. That as to this of the Opening of the *Hill*, and their going into it, ther is but one *Evidence*, that is, of a *Lame Boy* who Lagged behind. This wants the *second Mark*, of the *Fact* being done *Publickly* in the *Face of the World*. And if the *Boy* Lyed or was Mistaken in a *Fright*, there is an End of the whole *Story*. But all the Use this *Author* makes of it is, That if it was a *Cheat*, he is sure, as he says, p. 42. *That the PRIESTS had the chiefest Hand in the Contrivance*. Tho' ther is not a Word of a *Priest* in all the *Story*, unless he takes a *Pyper* for a *Priest*. But this shews his *Equality*, and how Ready he is to do *Justice* to the *Priesthood*!

7. His last Instance is p. 43. Which leads us to the *Author* of the *Detection*. It is a noble Performance of his own which he Quotes, Intituled, *Priest-Craft in Perfection*, &c. And here he Enlarges, with Intolerable *Assurance*, upon what he there Endeavour'd to Prove, viz. The *Detection* of a *Forgery* of the *English Divines*, in Foisting a *Clause* into the 20th *Article* of our *Church*. And he has the Folly to say, That this *Detection* too has all the *four Marks*. But he has had the *Mortification* since
to

to see the *Church of England* Vindicated, and the *Forgery* turn'd upon *Himself* and *Partners*. And to Encrease his *Torment*, done by a *Priest*; which makes the *Evil Spirit* that Possesses him, *Grasp* his *Teeth*, and *Rage* in his Impotent *Malice*, being now overcome by Those who shall *Judge* him at the last Day.

8. These are all the Instances brought in the *Detection* to overthrow the *four Marks*. Which he calls p. 45. *destruere aliena*, to Confute these *Proofs* in Defence of *Christianity*. But he promises, *ponere Nostra*, to give his *Proofs* for it, in another Work of his, Soon (or Never) to see the Light. If he had Intended it, he wou'd have given us some *Specimen* of it in this, where he Spends much the greatest Part of his Book in bitter *Railing* and most *Scurrilous* Reflections, First upon my *Self*, and then upon all *Clergy* and *Priesthood*. Which I think not Worth my while to Answer.

9. He concludes with Personating a *Deist*, and telling what he wou'd say, which he does very Naturally, thus, p. 47. " That he wou'd so far have
" entered into a Nice and Critical Dis-
" quisition of the *Matter*, *Weight*, and
Authentickness

16 The Short Method with

“ *Authentickness* of the Books of the Old
 “ and *New Testament*, as to have Ren-
 “ dred them both *Spurious* and *Incre-*
 “ *dible* ; and Consequently no Compe-
 “ tent Witnesses of what they Relate,
 “ either concerning *Miracles*, or any
 “ other extraordinary Accounts, or
 “ Supernatural Occurrences contained
 “ in *Reveal’d Religion*.

This is the Work he has been lately
 about in *Holland* with his Friend *Toland*
 (who Consecrates the *Sacrament* for
 his *Dog*!) and other *Free-Thinkers*, of
 which I have seen an Account from
 good Hands. And they are in Quest
 of some fine Old *Manuscript*, which will
 Prove that *Jesus* was Thirty Years in
Egypt and more Skill’d in all the Lear-
 ning of that Country than *Moses*. And
 that they Both did their *Miracles* by
Magick. I remember an Old *Jew* with
 whom I had frequent Conversation,
 after I had given him one of these
 Books of the *Deists* and *Jews*, told me
 that ther was such a *Manuscript* con-
 cerning *Jesus* being so long in *Egypt*,
 but that they durst not Produce it in
 a *Christian* Country. I ask’d him if
 the Truth of that *Manuscript* cou’d be
 Vouched by the four Marks, which
 their

the *Deists*, Vindicated. 17

their *Old* and our *New Testament* had? He said, No, it cou'd not Stand that *Test*, but it might be True for all that. But this *Author* can easily supply the Defect, and make it bear the *four Marks*, full as well as these *Stories* to which he Applies them. And I wou'd Advise him, That when his *Opus Palmare* comes out, which he has Concerted with *Toland*, *Le Clerc*, &c. in Aid of the Book of the *Rights* (Abridg'd and Translated into *French* by the Latter, with high Commendations, in his *Bibliothèque Choisie*) to Detect the *Apocryphal Books* of the *New Testament* (that is, of them all) he wou'd take Care to Fortify his Vouchers with the *four Marks*. Which will be no difficult Task, in the Manner he has done it to his *Priest-Craft* in *Perfection*!

(IV.) When the *Short Method with the Deists* came first out, I had Verses sent me of Hideous Blasphemy, wherein our Lord *Christ* was Banter'd with Diabolical Malice.

1. But the first that Appear'd in Print against it was Monsieur *Le Clerc* before mention'd, in his *Bibliothèque Choisie*, in the Year 1706. Tome viii. p.

18 The Short Method with

394, 395. Where he Treats me with a *Haughtiness* and *Contempt*, I did not think worth Notice. Had he been a Friend to *Christianity*, he wou'd not have Affronted any One for Appearing on its behalf, tho' his Performance had been Weak; but rather have Encouraged him, and kindly Inform'd him wherein he had come short, and how to have Improved. He wou'd have told him what other *Topick* had been more Proper for the Proof of *Christianity*. And wou'd not have run down This, without Shewing a Better. Which he has not done, but Refer'd it to another time, like the *Author* of the *Detection*.

2. And, as others when they have Nothing left to say, he throws the *Revolution* at me — Can any Good thing come out of *Nazareth*? He says, I have Wrote *Seditious* and *Scandalous Discourses*, but Names none. So that he may Father upon me what he pleases, as others have done. And remember that this was in 1706. So that Nothing laid to my Charge since can be here Meant.

3. But now as to his Arguments against the *Method with the Deists*, the fairest Way will be to give you them in his

his own Words, that I be not thought to Misrepresent them, or Abate any thing of their Force. Take them then thus, Translated into *English*.

“ *Pour Moi* — For my Part, I am
 “ Inclunable to be of Mr. *Hody*’s Opi-
 “ nion, who thinks ther were some
 “ Anniversary Diversions in that Place,
 “ which being very much frequented
 “ by the *Jews* who Inhabited that
 “ Part of *Alexandria* which lay on the
 “ Sea Coast, some People tenaciously
 “ Fond of the *Greek Version* made o-
 “ thers believe it was in Memory of
 “ it that these Rejoicings were made
 “ in the Isle of *Pharos*. Those that have
 “ Read the *Greek Mythologists*, or even
 “ *Ovid*’s *Fæsti* have often Observed,
 “ That ther were among the *Pagans*
 “ several *Festivals* Instituted in Memo-
 “ ry of some Events which never hap-
 “ pened, tho’ these *Festivals* were said
 “ to bear Date immediatly from them.
 “ Such *Fables* having once obtained
 “ Credit in Mens Minds, these *Holy*-
 “ Days were Established by Degrees,
 “ through the Artifice of the *Priests*, who
 “ made their own Advantage by them.
 “ And as their *Beginnings* were not
 “ Committed to *History*, in a Genera-
 “ tion

20 *The Short Method with*

"tion or two after, the *Original* of
 "them was Derived from the very
 "Time when the things that were
 "thus Commemorated were said to
 "have Happened. This is an useful
 "Observation against some Persons
 "full of blind Zeal, not to give it a
 "worse Name, and little Skill'd in
 "History, who make use of these *In-*
 "stitutions to prove the Truth of *Le-*
 "gends, or even of the *Sacred History*,
 "which stands in no Need of such
 "equivocal Proofs that are as applica-
 "ble to *Falsbood* as to *Truth*. Ther is
 "I know not whom, who in Compa-
 "rison of these Despises the strongest
 "Proofs of *Christianity*, I know not
 "for what End, but I very much suspect
 "it can only be to Establish some
 "Deceitful *Traditions*, and put them
 "upon the Level with the most Au-
 "thentick *Doctrines* of *Christianity*, in
 "Order to make a Profit or Advantage
 "by them. The *Seditious*, *Scandalous*,
 "and violent *Writings* of this Man
 "cannot Allow me to have a better
 "Opinion of him. I need not further
 "Characterise an *Author* who seeks to
 "gain a Reputation by Insulting
 "those who wou'd think it a Blemish
 "to

“ to their own, to lose their time in
“ Answering him.

I will not pretend to Guess here
whom he Means that I have *Insulted*.
For I will not Degress. But here is
the full of the *Argument* that is made
Use of in the *Detection*, which is No-
thing else but a *Comment* upon this
Text. And now we see the *Combina-
tion*.

4. I am willing to have as mean an
Opinion of my self as Mr. *Le Clerc* or
the *Detection* wou'd have me. And I
put not the Truth of *Christianity* upon
the Issue of any *Topick* I can make use
of to Demonstrate it. No, God forbid.
Let *God* be *True*, but every *Man* a *Liar*.
But I may be Allowed to stand by that
Argument which has Confirmed me
and others in the Truth of *Christianity*,
till I see it fairly Confuted, and some
Better given.

5. And I desire Mr. *Le Clerc* to
Prove what he Charges upon me,
That I despise the *Strongest Proofs* of
Christianity, in Comparison of those I
have Advanc'd. What other *Proof* have
I despised? What other *Proof* has he
Named? And he should have Named
that stronger *Proof* at the same time
that

22 The Short Method with

that he Endeavour'd to overthrow this *Proof*, lest having taken Men off from one *Foundation*, and giving them no other to stand upon, he might leave them no *Foundation* at all, and so Disengage them Quite from all *Christianity*, and make them errant *Deists*. And ther is more Suspicion, by this Management, of this being the Design, than of my Endeavouring to Introduce *Popery* or *Paganism*, by shewing such *Proofs* of *Christianity*, as none of their *Legends*, of the one sort or the other, can Pretend to: Notwithstanding all the Zeal Mr. Le Clerc or the *Detection* have shewed, to make the *Facts* of *Christ* as *Fabulous* as the other.

6. Therefore in Defence of *Christianity* I will shew the Failings of Mr. Le Clerc's Argument against it, and that by the four Marks which he so much Despises. First then, the *Fact* of some *Jews* making others believe that the *Rejoicings* at *Pharos* was in Memory of the *Greek Version*, Wants all the *Marks*. Unless Mr. Le Clerc can shew, That the *Greek Version* was a *Fact* done Publickly in the Face of the World; and can produce a *Book* Wrote at the *Time*, by the *Actors* or *Eye-Witnesses*, and Containing the

the *Institution* of these *Rejoicings* at *Pharos*, to be Perpetually kept up in Memory of it.

7. Next, for the *Greek Mythologists* and the *Fæti* of *Ovid*, they are a plain *Proof* against the *Facts*, and shew, That they were Related not as *Truths* in *Fact*, but only to Express some *Mythology* or *Moral*, by such *Feigned Representations*, like that of *Æsop's Fables*, or *Romances* Wrote for the same End.

But he says, " That these *Fables* having once obtained Credit in Mens Minds, these *Holy-Days* were Established by Degrees, through the Artifice of the *Priests*; And as their *Beginnings* were not Committed to *History*, in a Generation or two after, the *Original* of them was derived from the very *Time* when the things that were thus Commemorated were said to have Happened.

But does he not see, That the *four Marks* Obviate all these *Delusions*? Their *Holy-Days* or Commemorative *Institutions* came on by *Degrees*. They did not Commence from the *Time* the *Facts* were said to have been done.

8. In the next place, he wholly gives up the Cause, when he says, That their

24 The Short Method with

Beginnings were not Committed to *History*, For then ther is no *Book* to be Confronted with our Holy *Bible*, which was Wrote at the *Time* when the *Facts* therein Related were done, and the *Institutions* in Memory of them were then made, by the very *Actors* of the *Facts*, that is, by *Moses* and by *Christ*. And these *four Marks* were thought upon, especially the *Fourth*, on purpose to Distinguish the Truth of our Holy *Scriptures*, and of the *Facts* therein Related, from the *Heathen* or *Popish Books* of *Legends*. And tho' Mr. *Le Clerc* upbraids me with my little Skill in *History* (wherein I do not Contend with him) yet he sees I have Consider'd the Matter so much, That he (with all his *Historical Talents*) can find no Instance of any *Fabulous Stories*, which has all these *four Marks*. And besides I can tell him, That we have in *History* the beginnings of the Heathen *Feasts*, &c. in Memory of their *Gods*, and by whom *Instituted*, in after Times, and not by these *Gods* themselves, nor Related by *Eye-Witnesses*.

9. Yet he says, many believed these *Fables*. I doubt it not. It is no News to tell us, That *false Stories* may be Imposed

Imposed upon People, and believed by them. But to Distinguish these from true *Facts*, and to lead People into a just Method of Thinking, in this most *Material* Point, was my humble Endeavour in finding out these *four Marks*. Which (Blessed be God) have yet Stood their Ground against all the Attacks made upon them.

10. I will take leave of Mr. *Le Clerc* at this time, with shewing the good Correspondence betwixt him and the Author of the Book of the *Rights*. No sooner was that Book made Publick, but Mr. *Le Clerc* thought it Worthy a Place in his *Bibliotheque Choisie*, and that it might Spread, he made an Epitome of it, and put it into *French*. With high Commendations of it. In return to which, the Men of the *Rights* Translated his *French* into *English*, and Published it in *London*, with all due Respects to Mr. *Le Clerc*, in a *Preface*.

And in the first *Defence of the Rights*, they forget not how much they owe to Mr. *Le Clerc*, and say,

“ If the Laws of Modesty allow
 “ one to say that in his own Defence,
 “ which at other times wou’d be Un-
 “ pardonable,

26 The Short Method with

“ pardonable, the Author of the *Rights*
 “ Considering how Busie so many *Pu-*
 “ *piteers*, like the Crafts-Men of *Ephe-*
 “ *sus*, are to stir up the People against
 “ him as an Enemy to their Temple
 “ and Religion, might be Excus'd, if
 “ to take off the Edge of the Envy,
 “ and to Allay the Force of that Pre-
 “ judice their utmost Clamours raise
 “ against him, he Mentions the Cha-
 “ racter that is given of it by a Clergy-
 “ Man Celebrated over all the Learned
 “ World for his deep Penetration, ex-
 “ act Judgment, and great Skill in
 “ Divinity: But the Greater the Cha-
 “ racter is that is given, and the
 “ Greater the Person that gives it,
 “ the less he presumes to mention it;
 “ and therefore shall only refer the
 “ Reader to Monsieur *Le Clerc's Bibli-*
 “ *othèque Choisie*, Tom. x. particularly
 “ p. 309. 341. 357.

Thus I leave these Gentlemen in
 one anothers Company, Commending
 each other! For their Endeavours were
 the same, to overthrow all *Reveal'd*
 Religion. In which Sense the Book
 of the *Rights* may well be Reckon'd
 among the Opposers of the *Short Me-*
thod

thod with the Deists, tho' it proceeds not by way of direct *Answer* to it.

(V.) And now, that I may not Omit any of the *Opponents* I have had in this Cause of *Christianity*, I will lastly Name the *Observer*, who has put himself into the Number, in his *Paper* of the 7th last *June*, Vol. ix. N. 41.

(1.) Where first he Clears himself from being the *Author* of the *Detection*, which he says, was laid upon Him. But he Vouches for it, That it is no *Atheistical* Book. And brings this Argument, That some *Divines* have spoke with as much *Disregard* of the *Arguments* brought from the *SYBILLINE Oracles*. A decent Comparison indeed, when the Dispute was concerning the Truth of the Holy *Scriptures*! In short, he Condemns me, and says, *I have Betray'd the Cause*, and must be a *Papist*, because in all the *Short Method* I have not said, That the *Pope* is *Anti-Christ*! And he Concludes, "So that as Mr. *Leslie* has Managed the Matter, I cannot help thinking that our Holy Religion is little beholden to such an Advocate.

(2.) But he has Attempted that which neither Mr. *Le Clerc* nor the *Detection* have

28 The Short Method with

have Ventur'd upon, that is, to give his *Proofs* for *Christianity*, since he likes not that of the *four Marks*, And his *Proofs* are these.

1. Natural *Conscience* and *Reason*. And the *Depravation* of these, of which he says every Man is *Sensible*. Then to ask a *Pagan* or a *Deist*, whence comes this *Depravation*? And they cannot tell. But the *Scripture* tells, by the Fall of *Adam*, therefore the *Scriptures* must be *True*, and a *Divine Revelation*, because they tell us that, which we cou'd not have know without them.

2. The agreeableness of the *Doctrine* to the *Nature* of *God*, and *Exalting Morality*.

3. Its being *Contrary* to the *Corrupt Nature* of *Man*, against *Ungodliness* and *Worldly Lusts*, &c.

4. That by this way of *Proof*, it depends not on *Philosophy* or *Learning*, and stands not upon *Human Testimony* or *Authority*.

5. The *Clear Evidence* that the *Pope* is *Anti-Christ*, from ii *Thess.* 2. 4. &c.

As to the *First*, We find not *Christians* agreed about *Original Sin*, and its *Effects* upon us. And I doubt a
Deist

the *Deists*, Vindicated. 29

Deist wou'd first Desire a *Proof* of the *Authority* of the *Scriptures*, before he Believ'd that Relation of it which they give.

As to the *Second* and *Third*, the *Moral Philosophers* wou'd Contend for their *Precepts* of *Vertue*. And the *Brachmans* wou'd outdo you in *Mortification* of the *Flesh*, not to Name the *Papists*, least you shou'd call me Such.

And for the *Fourth*, Ther is no way to know the Truth of *Facts*, but what is *Human*, or by *Revelation*. And you Rejecting what is *Human*, consequently must trust to *Miracle* for the Conversion of a *Deist*. Unless your *Fifth* Proof of *Anti-Christ* will do it!

(3.) But, Sir, you go altogether upon the *Doctrine*, and Neglect the *Facts*. Whereas *Christ* appeal'd to the *Facts* for a Proof of his *Doctrine*. Believe me for the *Works* Sake. And if I had not done such *Works*, you had had no *Sin*, tho' you had not Believed me. *Joh. x. 25. 37, 38. xiv. 11. xv. 24.*

And as to the *Doctrine*, you go only upon that of *Morality*. Is *Christianity* then Nothing but *Morality*? Sir,

30 The *Short Method* with

Sir, you have not been so Taught, if you are a right *Presbyterian*.

The Christian *Faith* is, to Believe in *Christ* as having made *Satisfaction* for our *Sins*, by His perfect *Obedience*, and the *Sacrifice* of Himself upon the *Cross*. And how shall a *Deist* have this *Faith*, but by being Convinced that *Christ* is this *Saviour* of the World? And how shall he know that, but by his *Works*, testifying that he was sent of *God* for this End? And how shall he be Satisfy'd of the Truth of the *Facts*, but by such *Human Evidence* as I have given, and as all other *Facts* are Proved? Unless (as I said) you wou'd have a *Miracle* to Convince him! I doubt this Method has made many *Deists*, at least has Confirmed them.

(VI.) I remember soon after the *Short Method* came out, some Dissenting *Preachers* desir'd a Conference with me upon the Subject. And they Treated me much more Civilly than the *Observer*. They expressed a Liking of what I had done, but told me withal, That I had Omitted the strongest *Proof* for *Christianity*. I took it very Kindly, as I ought, and pray'd them

them to tell it me, that I might Add it in the next Edition. They said it was the *Self-Evidence* of the *Scriptures*, from the *Dignity* of the *Matter*, and *Majesty* of the *Stile*, beyond any other *Writing*. I told them I was fully Convinc'd of it in my own Mind, and found that *Comfort* and *Exultation* in Reading them, Infinitely beyond any other *Book* or *Writing* in the World. And that I doubted not it would Convince any who seriously Attended to it. But that I had to do with *Deists* who were *Scoffers*, and Trampled these *Pearls* under their Feet. And therefore that some other *Topick* must be found out for them, to Perswade them by the plain *Principles* of *Reason*, to which only they Appealed, and of which only indeed they were Capable. For they had not yet Experienced that *The Word of God is Quick and Powerful, and Sharper than any two-Edged* Heb. iv. 12. *Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart.* And Reading the *Scriptures* with Prejudice, and Minds Unprepared, they Felt not within themselves,
That

32 The Short Method with

That the Law of the Lord is an undefiled Law, Converting the Soul; that the Statutes of the Lord are Right, and Rejoice the Heart; that the Commandment of the Lord is Pure, and giveth Light unto the Eyes. This appears only to those who are Religiously Exercised in the Holy Scriptures.

*Psal. xix.
7, 8.*

Then that Text was urged to me, i Joh. ii. 27. *You need not that any Man teach you, but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, I answer'd, That this was Spoke only to Believers. As it is said ver. 20. Ye have an Unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. After which immediatly follows ver. 21. I have not Written unto you, because ye know not the Truth, but because ye know it, &c. Several other Texts of the like Nature were Quoted, but they were all found to Terminate only in Believers. I then shewed how differently St. Paul Argued with the Athenians, Act. xvii. 24. &c. He took his Topicks from Providence and the Works of God, from Principles allowed by themselves. But he Quoted no Scripture to them, but he Quoted Aratus one of their own Poets, who said, We are the Off-spring of God. Whence the*
Apostle

Apostle Reasoned with them, That the *Godhead* cou'd not be like the *Images* they made of *Gold*, *Silver*, &c. But he Reasoned with the *Jews* out of the *Scriptures*. One said, he was Satisfy'd every one was Convinced of the Truth of the *Scriptures* who Read them, tho' they wou'd not Confess it. I told him I was too well Convinc'd there were *Deists* in the World. And I durst not venture upon that Argument with them, to tell them I was sure they did *Believe*; in Regard not only to what they would have Thought of me; but of the *Cause*, for which I cou'd produce no other *Proof* but what they knew to be Utterly *False*! I will do that Justice to the Company I was in, That all, except this one Old Man, did at last Agree with me, that such *Topicks* were not to be Used with *Deists*.

(VII.) I have now done with the *Detection*, and all the Adversaries I have heard of who have Appear'd in *Print* against the *Short Method with the Deists*. And I hope its Force is not Abated by all these *Objections* made to it.

I have quite overlook'd all the *Impertinence* in the *Detection*, his *Ribbaldry* and *Billingsgate* against me, which has
D made

34 The Short Method with

made my Answer to him so Short; for by this I have cut off much the Greatest Part of his Book. He spends to the 14th Page upon these *Topicks*, before he comes to the *Argument*. And Interlards them often afterwards, which has Swell'd his Performance to such a Bulk.

But to give the Reader a Taste what Strefs is to be laid upon his most Positive *Assertions*, I will name but one, with which he fills up p. 28. Repeating it over and over again with the Utmost *Assurance*, viz. That both Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have made *Collections* for me. He says, he would Prove it, "If it had not been as *Flagrant* and " *Notorious* as our *Acts* of Parliament, " or Publick *Proclamations*." Now is it not Strange, that what is so *Flagrant* and *Notorious* to all the Nation (if this Gentleman's Word may be taken) should not be known to the Person concerned? For I am very Positive that he Never Receiv'd any such *Collections*, from Both or Either of the *Universities*. And I doubt not if *Collections* had been made, a Method wou'd have been taken to have had them Convey'd to him for whom they were Intended. After this, I Suppose no body will put me to Disprove any *Facts* related by this Author! THE

THE LETTER

ABOUT

Sommonocodom.

S I R,

I Have at your Desire, look'd into some Late Accounts of the Kingdom of *Siam*, and compar'd what they relate of the Pretended God *Sommonocodom*, with his History, as deliver'd by that truly Pious and Learned Adversary of yours, who has so Ingeniously Prov'd you a *Papist Missioner*; tho' were his Logick Orthodox, I think you ought as soon to be taken for One of the Ancient *Flamins* or Modern *Talapoins*. 'Tis obvious to

D 2

the

the most Superficial Reader, That that Fable must be either the Foundation or Corruption of our *Gospel*; and which of these is the most Probable, may by the Application of your *Four Rules* to each of them, be quickly Discover'd. As far therefore as I can Apprehend, the only Inference to be Naturally Drawn from this System of Modern *Paganism*, is to shew, That *Christendom* was once of a greater Extent than it is at present; That the *Gospel* was Preach'd in the remotest Parts of the East, before the *French* or *Portuguese* Missions; and that so Prodigious a Depravation of *Human Reason* stands in great Need of being once more Set Right. I am willing to Believe, that all the Particulars mentioned in the *Detection*, are so many Articles of the *Siamese Creed*; tho' there are some of them, which I have not been able to meet with, either in *Pere Tachard*, or Two other Authors, of as Good or Better Credit, and those are *L' Abbe Choisy*, who went as Assistant to Monsieur *Chaumont*, the First Ambassador Sent by the *French King* to *Siam*, and Monsieur *La Loubere*, who went afterwards thither, with the Character of Envoy Extraordinary: Perhaps what is

Omitted

Omitted in these may be Found in Monsieur *Gervaise*, whose Book I have formerly Read, but cou'd not now Procure. I must however take Notice, that our Historian has, as most Authors do, taken Care to Relate only what might Serve to his own Purpose, which was visibly no other than to Ground the Worship of *Jesus Christ* and that of *Sommonocodom* on the same Degree of Probability; and therefore he has Prudently Omitted such Pretended Miracles of the Latter, as could only Serve to make the whole Story Ridiculous to a Superlative Degree. Among these I Suppose, most People will Rank the Two that Follow, and yet they seem better Able to bear the Test of your *Rules* than any of the rest. *Sommonocodom* Once Flying a *Paper Kite* (an Exercise not altogether Unknown in *England*) found the Height and Inequality of certain *Trees* to be a Great Obstacle to his Pleasure, upon which he Commanded the Tops of those *Trees* to Fall Even; they instantly Obey'd: Flying of *Kites* has been ever since a Solemn Diversion among the *Siamese*, I mean those of the Greatest Authority and Distinction; and to Favour them in it,

the *Trees* continue Still Even. Another time *Sommonocodom* being upon an Expedition that requir'd Haste, took a Stride from the Isle of *Ceylon* to the Kingdom of *Siam*, which are not above *Twelve Hundred Miles* Afunder, nor much Less, if our *Maps* are not very Defective. To Prove the Truth of this, they shew us the *Print* of both his *Feet*; that which is to be Seen in *Ceylon*, is Still on the Top of a High Mountain; that of *Siam* is on a Rock now almost even with the Plain, the Mountain Once as High as the Other, having Sunk under the Mighty Weight of the *Deity*. 'Tis indeed Remarkable, that this *Print* of the *Foot* does not shew it to have been above Four or Five times Bigger than One of ours, which Disproportion to so Large a Step, would be a Sufficient Ground to One of our *Christian Philosophers* to Question the Truth of the *Fact*; and even in *Siam*, where the Greatest Wits are Less Scrupulous, there were those Alive in 1688, who Affirm'd that *Monument* not to be of above *Ninety Years* Standing. Yet the *King* and all his Subjects, Clergy and Laity, paid it an Extraordinary Veneration. Such Instances as these may serve for a Taste of the

the

the *Indian* Penetration and Judgment in Matters of Religion; and they are much of the same Pitch in what relates to *Arts* and *Sciences*. Their *Histories* are all either Barren, or Fill'd up with Adventures too Gross to find Place in our *Romances*; Truth, Reason, and Nature, are what they Mind Least, they think Sticking Close to any of them, to be a Mark of a Servile Genius, that Wants Fertility and Invention. Their Roving Imagination is continually employ'd in Quest of *Wonders*, and when they've done, they'll Assert with the Greatest Air of Conviction, the most Extravagant Absurdities. Thus One of the Chief *Ministers* of the King of *Siam*, being Sent by his Master to Congratulate Monsieur *Chaumont*, the *French* Ambassador, upon his Arrival on their Coasts, he presently Claim'd Acquaintance with him, putting him very seriously in Mind how above a Thousand Years before, he had been Sent by the then King of *France* to Conclude an Alliance with the Crown of *Siam*. The *Mandarin* did in this Compliment Allude to the *Transmigration* of Souls, the First Principle of their *Religion*, which being Universally Believ'd, gives every

one that Pleases an Opportunity of relating whatever comes Uppermost of the various Accidents which have Be-fallen him in all the Bodies he has passed thro', and you may easily guess 'twou'd be very hard to Disprove him, but indeed they are generally too well Bred to offer at it, and as ready to Believe the Wildest Chimera's of others, as they are to Vent their own. The *Talapoins* never fail to make their own Advantage of this Disposition, and by the Fabulous Notions with which they fill the Peoples Brains, preserve themselves in Great Credit, both their Persons and Habitations being held so Inviolable, that even the Boldest Tyrants and Usurpers have Scrupled Openly to Infringe their Rights; a Remarkable Instance of which happen'd in the Last Age. The Chief *Minister* of State, or as others say, a *Prince* of the Blood, having form'd a Conspiracy against his *Sovereign*, Broke into the *Palace* with Arm'd Force, and Oblig'd the Unfortunate *Monarch* to Fly for Shelter to a Neighbouring Convent of *Talapoins*, where he remain'd in perfect Safety, till the *Usurper* had with much ado Wheedled him out, and when he had done, got it Declar'd in a Great Convention of *Mandarins*,

Mandarins, that he had Forfeited his Right by Flying, and that his Abandoning the *Seat* of the *Empire* was Quitting the Government; in Consequence of which Vote he Stepped himself into the Throne.

These General Observations on the Genius and Temper of the People may not be improper; but to speak a little more particularly of *Sommonocodom* and his Worship, Shou'd any *Talapoin* go about to perswade me to Adore him, I shou'd desire some more Satisfactory Evidence of the Truth of that Doctrine than they usually give. The *Language* in which it is preserv'd is Different from the *Vulgar Tongue*, but they cannot inform us whether it ever was a Living Language, nor Where, nor When they Learnt it; the few *Books* they have, bear neither *Date* nor *Name*; They are in the same Uncertainty as to their *Civil Laws* and *Government*; *Siam* and *Laos* a Neighbouring Kingdom, Derive their Origin mutually from one another. Neither do their most Authentick Writings Agree on the Chief Circumstances of the *Birth*, *Life*, and *Death* of their *Messiah*. Sometimes they make him Son to

to a *King* of *Ceylon* by his Lawful *Queen* call'd *Mania* or *Maria*, and tell you that he had a Thousand Brothers, not Born after the usual Manner, but all Sprung out of the Impurities which accompany'd his Birth. At another time they will have him Born of a *Virgin*, who Living a *Retir'd* Life in an Impenetrable *Forest*, was during her *Prayers* Impregnated by the *Beams* of the *Sun*, and afterwards *Deliver'd* without *Pain*. They Agree as little about the *Place*, which Some say was on the *Banks* of a Great *Lake* between *Siam* and *Camboya*, Others in the *Isle* of *Ceylon*. After his Birth the *Fortune-Tellers* were Consulted by his *Father* King *Taousout*, to know what the Fate of his *Son* wou'd be; They told him that he wou'd be *Emperour* of the whole *Universe*, or if he Chose to Abandon the World, and become a *Talapoin*, he shou'd at Last arrive to the *Nireupan* or Sovereign Degree of *Felicity*. And here I must Observe, contrary to what the Author of the *Detection* is pleas'd to Assert, That *Sommonocodom* is not Pretended to be the *Founder* of the *Siamese Religion*, or the *Institutor* of their *Ascetic* Orders. They Hold the One and the

the Other to be as Ancient as the *World*, that is *Eternal*. For they have not so much as the Notion of the First and Supreme *Being* which we call *God*, and Worship as the *Creatour* and Sovereign Lord of all Things. Their *Scheme* in short is this: There is a Continual *Transmigration* of *Souls* from One *Body* into Another, *Beast*, *Fish*, or *Man* indifferently. The *Soul* that Behaves it self well in One Station, meets its Reward by being plac'd next time in a Better, and *Sin* is Punish'd after the same Method; yet all this is not suppos'd to happen thro' the Will and Direction of any Over-ruling *Providence*, but to proceed from a Fatal *Necessity*, or rather from the Nature and Essence of *Vertue* and *Vice*, as the *Flame* Ascends, and the *Loadstone* Attracts Iron. But when a *Soul* after the Revolution of many Ages, has in all its Various Habitations, perform'd its Part so well, as to have acquir'd a Fix'd and Unalterable Habit of *Vertue*, it becomes *Nireupan*, that is, 'tis Freed from the *Troubles* of this *World*, and Discharg'd from all further Attendance upon *Matter*, and thenceforward Enjoys an *Eternal Rest*, without Care
or

or Concern for what passes among *Men*. Of these Perfect *Souls* they reckon in all but *Four*, of which *Sommonocodom* was the Last, who notwithstanding his Incapacity of Doing *Good* or *Hurt*, is still, say they, to be Worshipp'd, till Another, whom they Daily Expect, Appears. Such were the *Gods* whom *Epicurus* allow'd, that he might Avoid the Scandalous Name of *Atheist*, and whom he wou'd have to be Ador'd for no other Reason than the Excellency of their own *Nature*. And 'twas perhaps from these *Indians* that the *Stoicks* Borrow'd their Notion of *Vertue* being its own *Reward*, tho' by their Way of Explaining it, they made it yet more Absurd. To return to our Story; *Sommonocodom* resolv'd to become a *Talapoin*, in which Pious Undertaking he had for Companions *Ten Thousand* Young Men, all *Princes*, all of his own Kindred. One of his First Acts of Heroick Vertue, was to Pluck out both his *Eyes*, and then Kill his *Wife* and *Two Children*, to Satisfie the Hunger of some of his *Disciples*: How to Reconcile this Action with their own *Law*, (which not content to Condemn *Murther* as the
Greatest

Greatest of Crimes, looks upon all *Killing*, even of a *Beast*, to be extremely *Sinful*) may perhaps be somewhat Difficult: but this was not the only *Blood* he Shed, for being Transform'd into a *Monkey*, he Kill'd a *Strange Monster*, that was Coming to Devour a whole *City*; but this Cost him Dear as we shall afterwards find. Seeing himself violently Persecuted by his Wicked Brother or Kinsman *Thevetar* (for Authors are not agreed how nearly they stood Related) he began to Examine his Conscience, that he might Discover what he had Done to Deserve such Ill Usage; for 'tis in *Siam* a Fundamental Doctrine, that every *Action* Good or Bad, must Necessarily meet with a Proportionable *Reward*; and he remembered that being once in his Cups, he had thrown a small Stone at a *Talapoin*, and given him a Slight Wound, for which he had been Punish'd during *Four Hundred Ninety nine Generations*, and had besides Layn a Considerable Time in *Hell*. I believe you may by this time be Tir'd with such a *Rhapsody* of *Nonsense*, and therefore I shall come to a Conclusion of *Sommonocodom's* Life. His *Death* is Related
in

in Two Different Manners: Some tell you that having Liv'd to his *Eighty Second* Year, he Died of the *Cholick*, which he Got by Eating of *Swine's Flesh*, and this was a Judgment upon him, for his *Monkey Trick* in Killing the *Monster* mention'd before, the *Soul* of that *Monster* having been Since Transferr'd into that very *Swine*; Others say he Kill'd *Himself*, and Charitably Distributed his own *Flesh* amongst a Parcel of Ravenous *Beasts*. It is not, I think, our Business to Examine which Tradition is the Best Grounded, and for the *Siamese* they never Quarrel about the Matter. Let the Manner be what it will, they Place it *Five Hundred and Forty four* Years before the Birth of our *Saviour*, and from thence pretend to Number their Years. But Monsieur *La Loubere*, an Author of Great Credit, who Concludes upon very Good Grounds there never was any such *Man* in *Rerum Natura*, and Monsieur *Cassini* the Famous *Astronomer*, are both of Opinion, that this can only be an Arbitrary *Epoch* Deriv'd from some Remarkable Conjunction of the *Planets* which happen'd at that time, and might have been reckon'd a Proper Beginning for
Astronomical

Astronomical Calculations. Whether this Opinion be True or No, till the *Siamese* can Produce some *Monuments* or *Records*, Good or Bad, *Civil* or *Ecclesiastical*, of what Happen'd among them, or any where else, during the Space of 1300 Years from the Pretended Death of their God, till the Foundation of their *Monarchy*, which was but about 900 Years ago, I shall by the Benefit of your *Rules* preserve my self from Embracing their Religion. Cou'd a Chasm of Half that Time be found in our *Ecclesiastical History*, I am apt to believe we shou'd have but Few *Christians*, in so Discerning an Age as ours. I cannot take my Leave without putting you in Mind, to desire your *Antagonist*, that after having so Compleatly Demolish'd the Arguments with which you Undertake to Support *Christianity*, he wou'd at length Produce his own, and at the same time be pleas'd to tell us what the Use of *Miracles* shou'd be, for I have the Charity to Believe him too much a *Christian* to Deny there ever was any such thing, and too much a *Philosopher*, not to Admit of that Establish'd Axiom; *Deus et Natura nihil agunt frustra.* Had I the Honour

48 The LETTER, &c.

nonr of his Acquaintance, being my
self a little Inclī'd to *Scepticism*, I
wou'd Advise him as a Friend not to Be-
tray the same Disingenuity in Arguing
against *Revelation*, that he and others so
often Complain of in those who Con-
tend for it. I am &c.

September 21th, 1710.

Yours from the P. c. c.

God, till the Foundation of their House
be laid, which was but
I shall by the Benefit of your
love my self from Raising their Re-
ligion. God's a Chast of Hell that
Time be found in our Religious
way, I am apt to believe we shou'd
have but few Christians, in so Disce-
ring an Age as ours. I cannot take my
leave without giving you in Mind
to desire your Answer with
ing to Comply with Demands that Ar-
guments with which you Undertake to
support Christianity, the world at length
Produce his own, and at the same time
be pleas'd to tell us what the Use of
what shou'd be, for I have the Charity
to Believe him too much a Christian to
believe he ever says any such thing,
and too much a Philosopher, not to Admit
of what Establish'd Axiom, *Deus ex Ma-*
tius will give answer. Had I the Ho-
nour

THE

THE
Truth of Christianity
 DEMONSTRATED,
 IN A
DIALOGUE

Betwixt a

CHRISTIAN and a DEIST.

Wherein the Case of the *Jews* is likewise Consider'd.

(I.) CHRISTIAN.

IT is strange you shou'd stand it out so against your own Happiness, and Employ your whole Wit and Skill to Work in your self a *Disbelief* of any future *Rewards* or *Punishments*; only that you may live *Easie* (as you think) in
 E this

50 *The Truth of Christianity*

this World, and Enjoy your *Pleasures*. Which yet you cannot Enjoy free and Undisturb'd from the *Fear* of those things that are to Come, the Event of which you Pretend not to be *Sure* of: And therefore are *Sure* of a *Life* full of *Trouble* that admits not of any *Consolation*, and of a *Miserable* and *Wretched Death*, according to the Utmost that you your self Propose!

DEIST. How can you say that? When I propose to Live without any *Fear* of those things. I fear not *Hell*, and I have Discarded the Expectation of *Heaven*, because I believe Neither.

CHR. Are you *Sure* ther are no such things?

DE. That is a *Negative*, and I pretend not to *Prove* it.

CHR. Then you must Remain in a *Doubt* of it. And what a Condition is it to *Dye* in this *Doubt*, when the Issue is *Eternal Misery*! And this is the Utmost, by your own Confession, that you can Propose to your self. Therefore I call'd yours a *Disbelief*, rather than a *Belief* of any thing. It is we *Christians* who *Believe*, you *Deists* only *Disbelieve*.

And

And if the *Event* shou'd prove as you wou'd have it, and that we shou'd all be *Annihilated* at our *Death*, we shou'd be in as Good a Condition as you. But on the other Side, if the *Event* shou'd prove as We expect it, then you are Eternally *Miserable*, and We Eternally *Happy*. Therefore one wou'd think it the *Wiseſt* Part to take our Side of the Question.

Especially considering, That those poor *Pleasures*, for the Sake of which you Determine your selves against Us, are but meer *Amusements*, and no Real *Enjoyments*. Nay, we had better be without them than have them, even as to this Life it self. Is not *Temperance* and a *Healthful* Constitution more *Pleasant* than those *Pains* and *Aches*, *Sick Head* and *Stomach*, that are the Inseperable Companions of *Debauchery* and *Excess*, besides the Clouding our *Reason*, and turning *Sottish* in our *Understanding*?

DE. We take *Pleasure* in them for the Time. And mind not the *Consequences* — But however, a Man cannot *Believe* as he pleases. And therefore Notwithstanding all the *Glorious* and all the *Terrible* things you Speak

52 The Truth of Christianity

of, it makes Nothing to me, Unless you can Evidently *Prove* them to be so. And you must still leave me to *Judge* for my self, after you have done all you Can.

CHR. What I have said, is only to Dispose you to hear me *Impartially*, and not to be *Prejudiced* against your own *Happiness*, both *Here* and *Hereafter*.

(2.) DE. Well, without more *Prefacing*, the Case is this; I Believe a God as well as you. But for *Revelation*, and what you call the Holy *Scriptures*, I may think they were Wrote by *Pious* and *Good* Men, who might take this Method of Speaking as from God, and in His *Name*, as Supposing that those *Good Thoughts* came from Him, and that it wou'd have a greater *Effect* upon the *People*. And might Couch their *Morals* under *Historys* of things Suppos'd to be done, as several of the *Wise Heathens* have taken this Course, in what they told of *Jupiter* and *Juno*, and the Rest of their *Gods* and *Goddesses*. But as to the *Facts* themselves, I believe the One no more than the Other. Or that all the *Facts* in

in *Ovid's Metomorphoses*, or in *Æsop's Fables* were True.

CHR. You seem willing by this to preserve a Respectful Esteem and Value for the Holy *Scriptures*, as being Wrote by *Pious* and *Good* Men, and with a good *Design* to Reform the *Manners* of Men.

But your Argument proves directly against the Purpose for which you brought it. And makes the *Pen-Men* of the *Scriptures* to be far from *Good* Men, to be not only *Cheats* and *Impostors*, but *Blasphemers* and an *Abomination* before *God*. For such these same *Scriptures* frequently call those who Presume to speak as from *God*, and in His *Name*, when He had not sent them, and given them *Authority* so to do. And the *Law* in the *Scriptures* Condemns such to be *Ston'd* to *Death* as *Blasphemers*.

It was not so with the *Heathen*, their *Moralists* did not use the *Style* of *Thus saith the Lord*. And their *Philosophers* Oppos'd and Wrote against one another without any Offence. For all the Matter was which of them cou'd *Reason* Best, they Pretended to no more.

54 The *Truth of Christianity*

And for the *Facts* of the *Fables* of their *Gods*, themselves did not Believe them, and have Wrote the *Mythology* or *Moral* that was Intended by them.

DE. But many of the Common People did Believe the *Facts* themselves. As it is with the Common People now in the *Church of Rome*, who Believe the most Senseless and Ridiculous *Stories* in their Books of *Legends* to be as True as the *Gospel*. Tho' the more Wise among them call them only *Pious Frauds* to Encrease the Devotion of the People. And so we think of your *Gospel* it self and all the other Books you say were Wrote by Men *Divinely Inspir'd*. We will let you keep them to *Cajole* the *Mobb*, but when you wou'd Impose them upon Men of Sense, We must come to the *Test* with you.

CHR. That is what I desire. And to see whether ther are no more *Evidences* to be given for the Truth of *Christianity*, that is, of the Holy *Scriptures*, than are given for the *Legends*, and all the *Fabulous Stories* of the *Heathen Gods*. And if so, I will give up my Argument, and Confess that

it is not in my Power to Convince you.

DE. I cannot Refuse to Join *Issue* with you upon this. To begin then, I desire to know your *Evidences* for the Truth of your *Scriptures* and the *Faëts* therein Related.

(3.) CHR. If the Truth of the *Book* and the *Faëts* therein Related be proved, I suppose you will not Deny the *Doctrines* to be True.

DE. No. For if I saw such *Miracles* with my Eyes as are said to have been done by *Moses* and *Christ*, I cou'd not think of any greater Proof to be given, that such an one was sent of God. Therefore if your *Bible* be True as to the *Faëts*, I must Believe it in the *Doctrine* too. But ther are other *Books* which Pretend to give us *Revelations* from God, and we must know which of these is True.

CHR. To distinguish this *Book* from all others which Pretend to give *Revelations* from God, these *four Marks* or *Rules* were set down.

(I). That the *Faëts* Related be such of which Mens outward *Senses* their *Eyes* and *Ears* may Judge.

56 The Truth of Christianity

[This cuts off *Enthusiastical Pretences* to *Revelation*, and *Opinions* which may be Propagated in the Dark, and like the *Tares* not known till they are Grown up, and the first Beginning of them not Discover'd.]

II. That these *Facts* be done Openly in the Face of the World,

III. That not only Publick *Monuments*, but outward *Institutions* and *Actions* should be Appointed and Perpetually kept up in Memory of them.

IV. That these *Institutions* to be Observed should Commence from the Time that the *Facts* were done. And Consequently that the *Book* wherein these *Facts* and *Institutions* are Recorded, should be Written at the Time, and by those who did the *Facts*, or by *Eye* and *Ear-Witnesses*. For that is Included in this *Mark*, and is the main *Part* of it; To prevent *False Stories* being Coin'd in after Ages of things done many Hundred Years before, which None Alive can Disprove. Thus *Moses* Wrote his *five Books* containing his *Actions* and *Institutions*. And those of *Christ* were Wrote by His *Disciples*, who were *Eye* and *Ear-Witnesses* of what they Related. And particular Care was taken of this, as
you

you may see, *Act. i. 21, 22.* upon Chusing one to supply the Place of Judas, *Wherefore of these Men which have Company'd with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the Baptism of John, until that same Day that He was taken up from us, must one be Ordained to be Witness with us of His Resurrection.* And St. John begins his first Epistle thus, *That which was from the Beginning, which we have Heard, which we have seen with our Eyes, which we have Looked upon, and our Hands have Handled — That which we have seen and Heard declare we unto you.*

I have Explain'd this fourth Mark, because the Author of the Detection, either Wilfully or Ignorantly, seems not to Understand it. And this alone overthrows all the Stories he has told, which he wou'd make Parallel to the Facts of Moses, and of Christ; And therefore alledges that they have all these four Marks. But he must Begin again, and own that these four Marks still stand an Irrefragable Proof of the Truth of any Fact which has them All; Till he can Produce a Book which was Wrote by the Actors or Eye-Witnesses of the Facts it Relates; And shew that such Facts, having

58 The Truth of Christianity

ving the other *three Marks*, have been Detected to be *False*. Which when he can do, I will give him up these *four Marks* as an Insufficient *Proof*, and own I was mistaken in them. But hitherto they have stood the Test. For he himself will not say, he has produced any such *Book* in all his *Detection*.

If he says, That *Facts* may be *True*, tho' no such *Book* can be produced for them, and tho' they have not All the fore said *Marks*. I will easily Grant it. But all I contend for is, That whatever *Fact* has All these *four Marks*, Cannot be *False*. For example, Cou'd *Moses* have Perswaded Six Hundred Thousand Men that he had led them through the *Sea* in the Manner Related in *Exodus*, if it had not been True? If he Cou'd, it wou'd have been a Greater *Miracle* than the Other. The like of their being Fed Forty Years in the Wilderness without *Bread*, by *Manna* Rained down to them from Heaven. The like of *Christ's* feeding Five Thousand at a Time with Five Loaves. And so of all the Rest. The *Two* first *Marks* secure from any *Cheat* or *Imposture* at the Time the *Facts* were done. And the *Two* last *Marks* secure Equally from

from any *Imposition* in after Ages, because this *Book* which Relates these *Facts*, speaks of it self as Written at that *Time*, by the *Actors* or *Eye-Witnesses*; And as Commanded by *God* to be Carefully kept and Preserved to all Generations, and Read Publickly to all the *People*, at Stated *Times*, as is Commanded, *Deut.* xxxi. 10, 11, 12. And was Practised, *Josb.* viii. 34, 35. *Neh.* viii. &c. And the *Institutions* appointed in this *Book* were to be Perpetually Observed from the Day of the *Institution* for Ever among these *People*, in Memory of the *Facts*, as the *Passover*, *Exod.* xii. and so of the Rest. Now Suppose this *Book* to have been Forged a Thousand Years after *Moses*, Wou'd not every one say when it first Appeared, We never Heard of this *Book* before, we know of no such *Institutions*, as of a *Passover*, or *Circumcision*, or *Sabbaths*, and the many *Feasts* and *Fasts* therein Appointed, of a *Tribe* of *Levi*, and a *Tabernacle* wherein they were to serve in such an Order of *Priesthood*, &c? Therefore this *Book* must be an errant *Forgery*, for it Wants all those *Marks* it gives of it self, as to its own Continuance, and of those *Institutions* it Relates.

60 The Truth of Christianity

lates. No *Instance* can be shewn since the World began of any *Book* so Circumstantiated, that was a *Forgery*, and Pass'd as *Truth* upon any People. I think it Impossible, And therefore that the *four Marks* are still an Invincible *Proof* of the *Truth* of that *Book* and those *Fact's* wherein All these *Marks* do Meet.

But since I am come upon this Subject again, I will Endeavour to Improve it, and give *Four* other *Marks*, some of which no *Fact*, however *True*, ever had, or can have, but the *Fact* of *Christ* alone. Thus while I Support the *Fact* of *Moses*, I set that of *Christ* above him, as the *Lord* is above the *Servant*. And the *Jews* being herein principally Concerned, I will Consider their Case likewise as we go along. Therefore I add this Fifth *Mark* as Peculiar to our *Bible*, and to Distinguish it from all other *Histories* which Relate *Fact's* formerly done.

(V.) That the *Book* which Relates the *Fact's* contain likewise the *Law* of that *People* to whom it belongs, and be their *Statute-Book* by which their *Causes* are Determin'd. This will make it Impossible for any to *Coin* or *Forge* such

such a *Book*, so as to make it Pass upon any People. For example, if I shou'd Forge a *Statute-Book* for *England*, and Publish it next *Term*, cou'd I make all the *Judges*, *Lawyers*, and *People* believe, That this was their true and only *Statute-Book* by which their *Causes* had been Determined these many Hundred Years past? They must Forget their Old *Statute-Book*, and Believe that this *New Book* which they never Saw or Heard of before, was that same Old *Book* which has been Pleaded in *Westminster-Hall* for so many Ages, which has been so often Printed, and the *Originals* of which are now kept in the *Tower*, to be Consulted as ther is Occasion.

DE. I Grant that to be Impossible. But how do you Apply it?

CHR. It is Evident as to the *Books* of *Moses*, which are not only a *History* of the *Jews*, but their very *Statute-Book*, wherein their *Municipal Law*, as well *Civil* as *Ecclesiastical*, was Contained,

DE. This is so indeed as to the *Books* of *Moses*, to which they always Appealed; To the *Law* and to the *Testimony*. And they had no other *Statute-Book*. But this will not Agree to your *Gospel*,

62 *The Truth of Christianity*

Gospel, which is no *Municipal Law*, nor any *Civil Law* at all, and no *Civil Causes* were Tried by it.

CHR. The *Law* was given to the *Jews* as a Distinct and separate *People* from all other *Nations* upon the *Earth*. And therefore was a *Municipal Law* particularly for that *Nation* only of the *Jews*. But *Christianity* was to Extend to all the *Nations* of the *Earth*. And *Christians* were to be Gather'd out of all *Nations*, and therefore the *Gospel* cou'd not be a *Municipal Law* as to *Civil Rights* to all *Nations*, who had Each their own *Municipal Laws*. This cou'd not be without Destroying all the *Municipal Laws* in the *World*, of every *Nation* whatsoever. And then None cou'd be a *Christian*, without at the same time becoming a *Rebel* to the *Government* where he liv'd. This wou'd have been for *Christ* to have immediatly set up for *Universal* and *Temporal KING* of all the *World*, as the *Jews* expected of their *Messiah*, and therefore wou'd have made *Christ* a *King*. But He Instructed them in the *Spiritual Nature* of His *Kingdom*, that it was not of *this World*, nor did Respect their *Temporal* or *Civil Matters*. Which therefore He left in the same State he found them,
and

and Commanded their Obedience to their *Civil Governours*, tho' *Heathen*, not only for *Wrath*, but also for *Conscience* Sake. And as to the *Law* of *Moses*, He left the *Jews* still under it, as to their *Civil* Concerns, so far as the *Romans*, under whose Subjection they then were, would Permit them. As *Pilate* said to them, *Ye have a Law*. And Judge ye *Him* according to your *Law*.

But the *Gospel* was given as the *Spiritual* and *Ecclesiastical* Law to the *Church* whithersoever Dispersed through all *Nations*; for that did not Interfere with their *Temporal* Laws, as to *Civil* Government. And in this the *fifth* Mark is made Stronger to the *Gospel*, than even to the *Law*. For it is Easier to suppose that any *Forgery* might Creep in to the *Municipal* Law of a particular *Nation*, than that all the *Nations* whither *Christianity* is Spread shou'd Conspire in the Corruption of the *Gospel*, which to all *Christians* is of infinitely greater Concern than their *Temporal* Laws. And without such a Concert of all *Christian* Nations and People Supposed, no such *Forgery* cou'd pass Undiscover'd in the *Gospel*, which is Spread as far as *Christianity*, and Read Daily in their *Publick* Offices.

64 The Truth of Christianity

DE. But I say it is Discover'd, as Appears by the Multitude of your *Various Lections*.

CHR. That cannot be call'd a *Forgery*; it is Nothing but such *Mistakes* as may very Easily happen, and are almost Unavoidable, in so many *Copies* as have been made of the *Gospel*, before *Printing* was known. And considering the many *Translations* of it into several *Languages*, where the *Idioms* are Different, and *Phrases* may be Mistaken, together with the Natural *Slips* of *Amanuenses*, it is much more Wonderful, that ther are no more *Various Lections*, than that ther are so many.

But in this Appears the great *Providence* of God in the Care the *Christians* took of this, That they have Marked every the least *Various Lection*, even *Syllabical*: And that among all these ther is not found *One* which makes any Alteration either in the *Facts*, or in the *Doctrines*. So that instead of an *Objection*, this becomes a Strong *Confirmation* of the *Truth* and *Certainty* of the *Gospel*. Which stands thus perfectly Clear of so much as any *Doubt* concerning the *Facts* or the *Doctrines* there in Related.

But

But I will now Proceed to a Stronger Evidence than even this, and all that has been said before; which I have made the *Sixth Mark*, and that is the *Topick of Prophecy*.

(VI.) The great *Fact* of *Christ's* coming into the World was *Prophecy'd* of in the *Old Testament* from the Beginning to the End, as it is said *Luk. i. 70.* By all the Holy Prophets which have been since the World began.

This Evidence no other *Fact* ever had. For ther was no *Prophecy* of *Moses*, but *Moses* himself did *Prophecy* of *Christ*. *Deut. xviii. 15.* (Apply'd *Act. ii. 22, 23, 24.*) And sets down the several *Promises* given of Him. The first was to *Adam*, immediatly after the Fall. *Gen. iii. 15.* Where He is Call'd the Seed of the *Woman*, but not of the *Man*, because He was to have no *Man* for His *Father*, tho' He had a *Woman* to His *Mother*. And of None other can this be said, nor that He shou'd Bruise the *Serpents Head*, that is, overcome the *Devil* and all his Power.

He was again *Promis'd* to *Abraham*, as you may see *Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18.* See this Apply'd *Gal. iii. 16.*

F

Jacob

66 The Truth of Christianity

Jacob did Expressly Prophecy of Him, with a Mark of the Time when He shou'd come, and calls Him *Shiloh* or *He that was to be Sent*. Gen. xlix. 10.

Balaam Prophecy'd of Him by the Name of the *Star of Jacob*, and *Scepter of Israel*. Num. xxiv. 17.

Daniel calls Him the *Messiah* the *Prince*. And tells the Time of His *Coming* and of His *Death*. Dan. ix. 25, 26.

It was foretold that He shou'd be Born of a *Virgin*. Isai. vii. 14. In the City of *Bethlehem*. Micah. v. 2. of the Seed of *Jesse*. Isai. xi. 1. 10. His low Estate and *Sufferings* are Particularly Describ'd. Psal. xxii. and Isai. liii. And His *Resurrection*, Psal. xvi. 10. That He shou'd sit upon the Throne of *David* for Ever, and be Call'd, *Wonderful*, the *Mighty God*, the *Prince of Peace*. Isai. ix. 6. 7. *The Lord our Righteousness*. Jer. xxxiii. 16. *Jehovah Tsidkenu* (an Incommunicable Name given to None but the Great God alone) And, *Immanuel*, that is, *God with us*. Isai. vii. 14. And *David* whose Son He was, according to the *Flesh*, called Him his *Lord*. Psal. cx. 1.

The Cause of His *Sufferings* is said to be for the *Sins* of the *People*, and not for Himself. Isai. liii. 4, 5, 6. Dan. ix. 26.

And as to the *Time* of His Coming, it is Expressly said (to the Confusion of the *Jews* now) That it was to be before the *Scepter* shou'd depart from *Judah*. Gen. xlix. 10. In the *Second Temple*. Hag. ii. 7. 9. Within *Seventy Weeks* of the Building of it. Dan. ix. 24. that is, (according to the *Prophetical* known *Stile* of a *Day* for a *Year*) within *Four Hundred and Ninety Years* after.

(1.) From these and many more *Prophesies* of the *Messiah* or *Christ*, His Coming was the *General Expectation* of the *Jews* from the Beginning, but more especially about the *Time* in which it was foretold He shou'd Come. When several *False Messiahs* did Appear among them. And this *Expectation* still Remains with them, tho' they Confess that the *Time* foretold by all the *Prophets* for His Coming, is Past.

But what I have next to offer will be more Strange to you. You may say it was Natural for the *Jews* to Expect their *Messiah*, who was *Prophees'd* of in their Book of the *Law*, and was to be *Jew*, and *King* of all the Earth. But what had the *Gentiles* to do with this? There were no *Prophecies* to them.

68 The Truth of Christianity

Therefore what I have to Shew you is, That these *Prophecies* of the *Messiah* were likewise to the *Gentiles*. For it is said that He shou'd be the *Expectation* of the *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*. And *Gen. xlix. 10.* That the *Gathering* of the *People* (or *Nations*) shou'd be to Him. In the *Vulgar* it is Render'd *Expectatio Gentium*. The *Expectation* of the *Gentiles*. He is call'd the *Desire* of all *Nations*. *Hag. ii. 7.* And I will shew you the General *Expectation* the *Gentiles* had of His Coming, about the Time that He did Come.

They knew Him by the Name of the *East*. Their *Tradition* was, That the *East* shou'd Prevail, *Ut Valesceret ORIENS*, as I will shew you presently. But first let me tell you, That the *Holy Scripture* often Alludes to Him under this Denomination. The *Blood* of the Great *Expiatory Sacrifice* was to be Sprinkled towards the *East*. *Lev. xvi. 14.* to shew whence the True *Expiatory Sacrifice* shou'd Come. And He is thus frequently Styl'd in the *Prophets*. *Zech. iii. 8.* it is said, according to the *Vulgar*, I will bring forth my *Servant* the *EAST*. And *Chap. vi. 12.* Behold the *Man* whose Name is the *EAST*. Our *English* ren-

der

ders it in both Places the *Branch*, for the *Hebrew* Word bears both Senses. But the *Greek* renders it *Ἀνατολή*, which we Translate the *Day-Spring*. Luk. 1. 78. and put on the Margin *Sun-Rising* or *Branch*. The *Vulgar* has it *Oriens ex Alto*, the *East* or *Sun-rising* from on *High*. He is call'd the *Sun of Righteousness*, Mal. iv. 2. And it is said *Isai.* ix. 3. *The Gentiles shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising.*

(2.) Now, *SIR*. how Literally was this fulfill'd in the *Magi* (generally Suppos'd to be *Kings*) coming from the *East*, led by a *Star* which Appear'd to them in the *East*, to Worship *Christ* when He was Born, and to bring *Presents* unto Him as unto a *King*? As it is told in the *Second* of *St. Matthew*.

DE. Why do you Quote *St. Matthew* to me? You know we make no more of him than of one of your *Legend-Writers*, and believe this *Story* no more than that these *Three Kings* are now Bury'd at *Cologne*.

(3.) *CHR*. You make great Use of the *Legends*, and Answer every thing by

70 The Truth of Christianity

by them. And I confess they are the greatest *Affront* to *Christianity*, and (if Possible) a *Disproof* of it, as it must be to those who will Place them upon the same Foot with the Holy *Bible*, as too many do in the *Church* of *Rome*, and cry, we have the *Authority* of the *Church* for *Both*. And they are Taught to Receive the Holy *Scriptures* upon the *Authority* of the *Church* only. But my Business is not with them now. I shall only say, That when they can bring such *Evidences* for the Truth of their *Legends*, or for any Particular *Fact* in them, as I do for the Truth of the Holy *Scriptures*, and in Particular for the *Fact* of *Christ*, then I will Believe them.

DE. Will you believe Nothing that has not all these *Evidences* you produce.

(4.) CHR. Far from it. For then I must believe Nothing but this Single *Fact* of *Christ*. Because no other *Fact* in the World, no not of all those Recorded in Holy *Scriptures*, has all these *Evidences* which the *Fact* of *Christ* has. And so God has thought fitting, That this great *Fact* above all other *Facts*, of the

the greatest *Glory* to *God*, and *Importance* to *Mankind*, shou'd Appear with Greater and more undeniable *Evidence* than any other *Fact* ever was in the World.

DE. We are now upon the particular *Fact* of the *Magi* or *Wise Men* Coming to *Christ*. Have you any more to say as to that?

(5.) CHR. It has those same *Evidences* that the *Truth* of the *Bible* in General has, which are more than can be produc'd for any other *Book* in the World. But now as to this *Fact* in Particular, St. *Matthew* was the first who Wrote the *Gospel*, and it was in the same Age when this *Fact* was said to be done. And can you think it Possible that such a *Fact* as this cou'd have pass'd without *Contradiction*, and a Publick *Exposing* of *Christianity*, then so Desirable and so much Endeavour'd by the Unbelieving *Jews*, their *High-Priests*, *Elders*, &c. as the only Means for their own *Preservation*, if the *Fact* had not been *Notorious* and fresh in the Memory of all the People then at *Jerusalem*, viz. That these *Wise Men* came thither, and that *Herod* and the whole *City*

72 The Truth of Christianity

were Troubl'd at the News they brought of the Birth of the *King* of the *Jews*; That *Herod* thereupon gather'd all the *Chief-Priests* and *Scribes* of the *People* together, that they might Search out of the *Prophets* and know the *Place* where *Christ* shou'd be Born; And then the Slaughter of the *Infants* in and about *Bethlehem*, and in all the *Coasts* thereof, which follow'd — I say cou'd such a *Fact* as this have Pass'd at that very time, if it had not been True? Cou'd *St. Matthew* have hop'd to have Paum'd this upon all the *People*, and upon those very same *Chief-Priests* and *Scribes* who he said were so far Concern'd in it? Wou'd None of them have *Contradicted* it, if it had been a *Forgery*? Especially when the *Detecting* it would have Strangled *Christianity* in its Birth. Wou'd not They have done it who Suborn'd *false Witnesses* against *Christ*, and gave large *Money* to the *Soldiers* to Conceal (if Possible) His *Resurrection*? Wou'd not They have done it, who Persecuted *Christianity* with all *Spite* and *Fury*, and Invented all Imaginable *false Stories* and *Calumnies* against it? Whereas here was one at hand, this of the *Magi*, which, if False, cou'd have been so Easily De-
rected,

tested, by Appealing to every Man, Woman and Child, I may say, in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and even in all Judea, who no doubt had heard of the Terrible Massacre of so many Infants, and the Cause of it.

DE. I can give no Account why the Writers against Christianity did not Offer to Contradict this Fact of the Star and the Magi, which is put in the very Front of this Gospel of St. Matthew. And there it is call'd His (Christ's) Star. *We have seen His Star in the East*—As if God had Created a New and Extraordinary Star on Purpose, as the Signal of Christ hung out in the Heavens, to give the World Notice of His Birth. But did none of the Heathen Philosophers take Notice of this Star, or of this Relation given of it by your St. Matthew?

(6.) CHR. Yes. For Chalcidius in his Comment upon Plato's *Timæus*, Speaking of the Presages of Stars mention'd by Plato, adds as a further Proof, *Est quoque alia venerabilior & Sanctior Historia*—*There is likewise Another more Venerable and Holy History*—By which I doubt not he means this of St. Matthew,

74 The Truth of Christianity

them, for what he tells seems to be taken out of it, *That by the Rising of a Certain Unusal Star, not Plagues and Diseases, but the Descent of the Venerable God, for the Salvation and Benefit of Mortals, was Observed by the Chaldeans, who Worshipped this God Newly Born, by Offering Gifts unto Him.*

DE. This makes those *Magi* or *Wise Men* to have been *Chaldeans*, who I know were the most Noted then in the World for the most Curious Learning, particularly in *Astronomy*. And they were likewise *East* of *Jerusalem*, so that it might be well said they came from the *East*, and had seen His *Star* in the *East*. But I cannot Imagin how they shou'd Read the Birth of a *God* in the Face of a *New Star*; and how that *Star* shou'd fend them particularly to *Jerusalem*, tho' I may suppose it Pointed them *Westward*.

(7.) CHR. This will be Easier to you, when you know, That all over the *East* ther was a *Tradition* or fixt *Opinion*, that about that Time a *King* of the *Jews* wou'd be Born who shou'd Rule the whole Earth. And the Appearance of this Extraordinary *Star* in the

the East was taken by them as a Sign that He was then Born. And whither shou'd they go to look for the King of the Jews but to Jerusalem? And when they came thither, they Enquir'd, saying, *Where is He that is Born King of the Jews? For we have seen His Star in the East, and are come to Worship Him.* This made Herod gather the Priests and Scribes together. And they by Searching the Prophets found that Bethlehem was the Place. Whereupon the Wise Men went to Bethlehem. And to Convince them that they were Right, the Star which they had seen in the East appear'd to them again, and went before them till it came and stood over where the Young Child was. This made them Rejoice with such an Exceeding Great Joy.

DE. This wou'd go down in some Measure with me, if you cou'd make good your first *Postulatum*, of such a Current Tradition or Opinion in the East. But for this you have given no Sort of Proof. And all the Rest which you have Infer'd from thence must come to the Ground with it, if it be not Supported. I confess it wou'd seem as Strange to me as the Star to the Wise Men, if God had (We know not How, it

74 The Truth of Christianity

them, for what he tells seems to be taken out of it, *That by the Rising of a Certain Unusal Star, not Plagues and Diseases, but the Descent of the Venerable God, for the Salvation and Benefit of Mortals, was Observed by the Chaldeans, who Worshipped this God Newly Born, by Offering Gifts unto Him.*

DE. This makes those *Magi* or *Wise Men* to have been *Chaldeans*, who I know were the most *Noted* then in the *World* for the most *Curious Learning*, particularly in *Astronomy*. And they were likewise *East* of *Jerusalem*, so that it might be well said they came from the *East*, and had seen His *Star* in the *East*. But I cannot *Imagin* how they shou'd Read the Birth of a *God* in the Face of a *New Star*; and how that *Star* shou'd send them particularly to *Jerusalem*, tho' I may suppose it *Pointed* them *Westward*.

(7.) CHR. This will be *Easier* to you, when you know, That all over the *East* ther was a *Tradition* or fixt *Opinion*, that about that *Time* a *King* of the *Jews* wou'd be *Born* who shou'd *Rule* the whole *Earth*. And the *Appearance* of this *Extraordinary Star* in the

the East was taken by them as a Sign that He was then Born. And whither shou'd they go to look for the King of the Jews but to Jerusalem? And when they came thither, they Enquir'd, saying, *Where is He that is Born King of the Jews? For we have seen His Star in the East, and are come to Worship Him.* This made Herod gather the Priests and Scribes together. And they by Searching the Prophets found that Bethlehem was the Place. Whereupon the Wise Men went to Bethlehem. And to Convince them that they were Right, the Star which they had seen in the East appear'd to them again, and went before them till it came and stood over where the Young Child was. This made them Rejoice with such an Exceeding Great Joy.

DE. This wou'd go down in some Measure with me, if you cou'd make good your first *Postulatum*, of such a Current Tradition or Opinion in the East. But for this you have given no Sort of Proof. And all the Rest which you have Infer'd from thence must come to the Ground with it, if it be not Supported. I confess it wou'd seem as Strange to me as the Star to the Wise Men, if God had (We know not How,
it

76 The Truth of Christianity

it is Unaccountable to us) sent such a *Notion* into the Minds of Men, and at that Time only, of such a *King* to be Born, and that He shou'd be a *Jew* (the then most Contemptible *People* in the World, Subdu'd and Conquer'd by the *Romans*) and that He was to be *King* of the *Jews*, and thence to become *King* of all the Earth, and Conquer his Conquerors. The *Romans* wou'd have look'd with *Disdain* upon such a *Notion* or *Prophecy* as this; it wou'd have made some *Stir* among them, if they had heard of it, or given any Credit to it.

(8.) CHR. You Argue Right. And I will shew you what *Stir* it made among them, and I hope you will take their Word, (as well for this *Eastern* Tradition, as for the Effects it had among themselves. Nay they wanted not the same *Tradition* among themselves, and express *Prophecies* of it in their *Sibyls*, and otherwise. So that the same *Expectation* of the *Messiah* was then Current over all the Earth, with the *Gentiles* as well as with the *Jews*.

Tacitus in his *History*, l. 5. c. 13. Speaking of the great *Prodigies* that preceded the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, says, That many

many Understood these as the Fore-Runners of that Extraordinary Person, whom the *Ancient Books* of the *Priests* did foretell should come, about that Time, from *Judea*, and Obtain the Universal Dominion, his Words are, *Pluribus persuasio inerat, Antiquis Sacerdotum Litteris contineri, eo ipso Tempore fore, ut Valesceret ORIENS, profectique JUDEA rerum potirentur.* i. e. Many were persuaded that it was contained in the Old Writings of the *Priests*, that at that very time the *EAST* should Prevail, and the *JEWS* should have the Dominion. And *Suetonius* in the Life of *Vespasian* c. i. n. 4. says, *Percrebruerat ORIENTE toto Vetus & Constantis Opinio, esse in Fatis, ut eo Tempore, JUDEA profecti rerum potirentur.* i. e. That it was an Ancient and Constant Opinion (or Tradition) throughout the whole *EAST*, that at that Time those who came from *JUDEA* should Obtain the Dominion, that is, That some Jew should be Universal King. Therefore *Cicero*, who was a *Commonwealths-Man*, in his Second Book of *Divination*, Speaking of the Books of the *Sibyls*, who likewise Foretold this Great King to Come, says, *cum Antistitibus agamus, et Quidvis potius ex illis Libris, quam Regem proferant: quem Roma post hac nec Dii, nec Homines esse patientur.* i. e. Let us

deal

78 The Truth of Christianity

deal with these Priests, and let them bring any thing out of these Books, rather than a King: Whom neither the Gods nor Men will Suffer after this at Rome.

But he was Mistaken, and had his Head Cut off for Writing against Kingly Government. And others more Considerable than He laid Greater Stress upon these Prophecies, even the whole Senate of Rome, as I come to shew you.

Whether these Sibyls, gather'd their Prophecies out of the Old Testament, is Needless here to Examine. I am now only upon that General Expectation was then in the World of this Great and Universal King to Come about that Time.

(9.) The same Year that Pompey took Jerusalem, one of these Oracles of the Sibyls made a great Noise, which was, That Nature was about to bring forth a King to the Romans. Which, as Suetonius Relates in the Life of Augustus, c. 94. did so Terrify the Senate, that they made a Decree to Expose, that is, Destroy all the Children born that Year. *Senatum exterritum censuisse, ne quis illo Anno genitus Educaretur.* That none Born that Year shou'd be Brought up, but Expos'd, that is,

is, left in some *Wood* or *Desart Place* to *Perish*. But he tells how this Dreadful Sentence was Prevented, *Eos qui Gravidas Uxores haberent, quod ad se quisque Spem traheret, curasse ne Senatius Consultum ad Aerarium deferretur*. That those Senators whose Wives were with Child, because each was in hopes of having this Great King, took Care that the Decree of the Senate shou'd not be put into the *Aerarium* or *Treasury*, without which, by their Constitution, the Decree cou'd not be put in Execution. And *Appian*, *Plutarch*, *Salust*, and *Cicero*, do all say, That it was this Prophecy of the Sibyls which Rais'd the Ambition of *Corn. Lentulus* at that Time, hoping he shou'd be this King of the Romans. *Virgil* a few Years before the Birth of Christ, in his 4th *Eclogue* Quotes a Prophecy of one of these Sibyls Speaking of an Extraordinary Person, to be Born about that Time, who shou'd Introduce a Golden Age into the World, and Restore all things, and shou'd Blot out our Sins — *Si qua manent Sceleris Vestigia Nostris* — And calls Him, *Chara Deum Soboles, Magnum Jovis incrementum*. Dear Offspring of the Gods, and Great Son of *Jove*. He describes a New State of things like

80 The Truth of Christianity

like the *New Heavens* and *New Earth*,
Isai. lxxv. 17. Magnus ab integro Seclorum
Nascitur Ordo. A great Order of Ages
 does begin, wholly New. And as *Isaiah* de-
 scribes the Happy State in the *New*
Earth, That the *Lion* and the *Lamb*
 shou'd feed together, the *Serpent* eat
Dust, and that they shou'd not Hurt
 or Destroy in all the *Holy Mountain*.
Isai. lxxv. 25. Virgil does almost Repeat
 his Words. — *Nec Magnos Metuent ar-*
menta Leones. Occidet & Serpens, & fal-
lax Herba Veneni Occidet. And as God
 introduces the *Messiah*, with saying, *I*
will shake the Heavens and the Earth and
the Sea. *Hag. ii. 7. Virgil* does in a
 Manner Translate it in this *Eclogue*,
 Introducing the Great Person then to be
 Born, and the Joy shou'd be in the
 whole Creation.

Aspice Convexo Nutantem pondere Mun-
dum,

Terrasque, tractusque Maris, Cælumque
profundum.

Aspice Venturo Latentur ut Omnia Seclo.

Lo! teeming Nature Bending with its Load,
 The Earth, the Ocean, and the Heavens high.
 Behold how all Rejoice to Greet the Com-
 ing Age. Here

Here the Poet describes *Nature* as in Labour to bring forth this Great *King*, as the other *Prophecy* of the *Sibyls* before mention'd Speaks. And he says, *Aderit jam Tempus*. That the *Time* was then at Hand. *Jam Nova Progenies Cælo demittitur Alto*. Now a New Progeny from Heaven descends.

And he Applies it to *Saloninus* the Son of *Pollio* the *Consul*, then Newly Born, as if it, was to be fulfill'd in him. But as ther was Nothing like it in the Event; So these Words are too Great to be Apply'd to any *Mortal*, or the *Reign* of any *King* ever was in the World. Or to any other but to the *Messiah* the Lord of *Heaven* and *Earth*.

(10.) DE. But you know the Authority of these *Sibyls* is Disputed. Some say the *Christians* did *Interpolate* them, and Added to them in about a Hundred Years after *Christ*.

CHR. It is True the *Christians* did often Quote them against the *Heathen*, as *St. Paul* Quoted the *Heathen Poets* to the *Athenians*. Act. xvii. 28. And *Clem. Alexandrinus* in his *Strom.* l. 6. says that *St. Paul* quoted the *Sibyls* likewise in his Disputations with the

G

Gentiles

82 The Truth of Christianity

Gentiles. And the *Christians* were call'd *Sibyllianists* from their Quoting the *Sibyls* so often. But *Origen* in his Answer to *Celsus*, l. 7. Challenges him to shew any *Interpolation* made by the *Christians*, and Appeals to the *Heathen Copies* which were in their own Possession, and kept with great Care.

But what I have Quoted to you out of *Virgil* was before *Christ* was Born, and therefore Clear of all these Objections.

DE. Then the *Jews* must have had some Hand in them. As likewise in that *Eastern Tradition* you have Spoke of.

CHR. If so, you must Suppose that the *Jews* had it from their own *Prophets*. And this will be a Strong Confirmation that the *Time* of the *Messiah's* Coming was Plainly told in the *Prophets*.

(II.) DE. What say the *Jews* to this? For I cannot Imagine how they can get off of it.

CHR. Some of them say, That the *Messiah* put off His Coming at the Appointed *Time*, because of their *Sins*. Others say, He did come at the *Time*, but has Conceal'd Himself ever Since.

DE.

DE. These are meer *Excuses*. Do they Pretend any *Prophecy* for this? But to what Purpose? For these *Excuses* shew, That *Prophecies* are no *Proofs*, because if they may be thus put off, they can never be known. And they may be *Put off* and *Put off* to the End of the World.

(12.) CHR. But now, SIR, as to your Point. If this General *Expectation* both *East* and *West*, of the Great *King* of the *Jews* to be Born about that very Time that He did Come, was Occasion'd by the *Jewish* Tradition of it, it Strengthens the Truth of the Holy *Scriptures*, whence the *Jews* had it. But otherwise, if God we know not how, did Send such a *Notion* into the Minds of Men, all over the World, at that Particular Time, and never the like, either *Before* or *Since*, then the *Miracle* will be Greater, and the *Attestation* to the Coming of *Christ* Stronger, and as you said, it will be more *Wonderful* and more *Convincing* to you, than the *Star* was to the *Wise Men* in the *East*.

DE. I must take time to Answer this. I made nothing at all of this of the *Magi* and the *Star*, and of *Herod's* slaying

84 The Truth of Christianity

slaying the *Infants* upon it. I thought it a Ridiculous Story, and to have no Foundation in the World. But when I see *Suetonius* telling us of the *Decree* of the *Senate* of *Rome* to Destroy all the *Children* born that Year, and for the same Reason, for fear of this Great *King* that was then to be Born; I must think ther was a Strange Chiming in of things here, one to Answer the other. I know not how it happen'd. By Chance, or How!

(13.) CHR. You cannot Imagine ther cou'd be any *Concert* in this Matter. That the *Chaldeans*, and *Romans*, and *Jews*, shou'd All agree upon the Point, and Hit it so Exactly, without any one of them Discovering the *Contrivance*! Especially when it was so *Terrible* to both the *Romans* and the *Jews*, that they took such *Desperate* Methods to Prevent it as to Destroy their own *Children*!

DE. It is Ridiculous to talk of a *Concert*. I will not put my Cause upon that. Wou'd they *Concert* what they thought their own *Destruction*? Besides the *Jews* and *Romans* were then *Enemies*. And the *Chaldeans* were far off, and

and had little Correspondence with Either of them. And such an Universal *Notion* cou'd not be *Concerted*. Whole *Nations* cou'd not be *Trusted* with a *Secret*. And if they all kept it, and against their own Interest too, it wou'd be as Great a *Miracle* as any in your *Bible*.

(14.) CHR. How much more *Impossible* is it to suppose, That ther shou'd be a *Concert* between different *Ages*, between all the *Ages* from *Adam* downwards, in all those *Prophecies* of the *Coming* of the *Messiah*? How shou'd they know it but by *Revelation*? And wou'd they have all Agreed so Exactly as to the *Time*, *Place*, *Manner*, and other *Circumstances*, if it had been a *Forgery* Contriv'd by Different *Persons*, and in Different *Ages*?

(15.) This is an Argument which St. Peter thought Stronger than the Conviction even of our *outward Senses*, for having set down what he and the other two *Apostles* had both *Seen* and *Heard* upon the Holy Mount, he adds, We have yet a more sure Word (that is, a Stronger Proof) of *Prophecy*, whereunto

86 The Truth of Christianity

ye do well to take heed, as unto a Light that Shineth in a Dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts. ii. Pet. 1. 19. And he Enforces it thus, For the Prophecy came not in Old Time by the Will of Man, but Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

DE. I will Grant his Argument so far, That it is easier to suppose the Senses of Three Men, or of all the Men in the World to be Impos'd upon, than that Adam, Abraham, and I, had Concerted together. But I will not give you my Answer yet. Have you any more to say upon this Head of Prophecy?

CHR. I need say no more till your Answer comes. For you have Granted that this Proof is Stronger than what we See with our Eyes.

(16.) But that your Answer may take in all together, I will give you something further. I have set down already some of the Great Prophecies of the Coming of Christ, His Sufferings, Death and Resurrection. But ther are others which Reach to several Minute Circumstances, such as cannot be Apply'd

to any other *Fact* that ever yet happen'd, and which cou'd not have been Foreseen by any but *God*; nor were known by the *Actors* who did them, else they had not done them. For they wou'd not have Fulfill'd the *Prophecies* that went before of *Christ*, in Applying them to Him whom they *Crucify'd* as a *false Christ*.

See then how Literally several of these *Prophecies* were Fulfill'd. As *Psal.* lxi. 21. *They gave me Gall to Eat and Vinegar to Drink.* Then Read *Matth.* xxvii. 34. *They gave him Vinegar to Drink mingled with Gall.* It is said *Psal.* xxii. 16, 17, 18. *They pierced my Hands and my Feet — They Stand Staring and Looking upon me. They part my Garments among them, and Cast Lots upon my Vesture.* As if it had been Wrote after *Joh.* xix. 23, 24. It was meerly Accidental in the *Soldiers*, they wou'd not Tear his *Coat* because it was Woven and without Seam, therefore they cast Lots for it: Thus fulfilling this *Scripture*, without any knowledge of theirs, for they were *Roman Soldiers*, and knew nothing of the *Scripture*. Again it is said, *Psal.* xxii. 7. 8. *All they that see me, Laugh me to Scorn; they shoot out their Lips, and*

88 The Truth of Christianity

shake their Heads, saying, He trusted in God that He wou'd deliver Him; let Him deliver Him if He will have Him. Compare this with Matth. xxvii. 39. 41, 42, 43. And they that passed by, Reviled Him, Wagging their Heads, and saying — Come down from the Cross. Likewise also the Chief Priests Mocking Him, with the Scribes and Elders, said — He trusted in God, let Him deliver him now if He will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God. It is said again Zech. xii. 10. They shall Look upon Me whom they have Pierced. His very Price was foretold, and how the Money shou'd be Dispos'd of, Zech. xi. 13. Fulfilled Matth. xxvii. 6, 7. And His Riding into Jerusalem upon an Ass, Zech. ix. 9. which the Learned Rabbi Saadia expounds of the Messiah. That He shou'd Suffer with Malefactors. Isai. liii. 12. That His Body shou'd not lye so long in the Grave as to see Corruption, Psal. xvi. 10.

Many other Circumstances are told which cannot be Apply'd to any but to Christ. I have set down these few, that you may take them into Consideration when you think fit to give your Answer as to this Head of Prophecies.

And

And you are to take Care to find some other *Fact* Guarded with *Prophecies* like this. Or else you must Confess that ther is no other *Fact* that has such *Evidence* as this.

(17.) But before I leave this Head, I must Mention the *Prophecies* in our *Bible* of things yet to Come to the End of the *World*, and of the New *Heavens* and New *Earth* that shall Succeed.

DE. These can be no *Proofs* here, because we cannot see the *Fulfilling* of them.

CHR. you may believe what is to Come, by the *Fulfilling* you have seen of what is Past. But I bring this now to shew you, That ther is no other *Law* or *History* in the *World* that so much as Pretends to this, or to know what is to Come. This is Peculiar to the Holy *Bible*, as being Written from the Mouth of *God*.

You have seen how the Current of the *Prophecies* of the *Old Testament* did Point at and Center in that Great Event the Coming of the *Messiah*.

When He was Come, then He told us more Plainly of what was to Come after Him, even to the Consummation of

90 The Truth of Christianity

of all things. And by what we have seen exactly Fulfill'd of all He told us to this Time, we must believe what Remains yet to Come.

(18.) How particularly did He foretell the Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the *Temple*. Matth. xxiv. And that that Age shou'd not pass till it shou'd be Fulfilled? And His very Expression was Literally fulfill'd, That ther shou'd not be left one *Stone* upon another in the *Temple*, for the very *Foundations* of it were Plough'd up by *Turnus Rufus*. See *Scaliger's Canon. Isagog* p. 304.

When *Jerusalem* was first Besieg'd it was full of *Christians*. But the *Siege* was Rais'd Unaccountably and for no Reason that *History* gives. In which time the *Christians* Seeing those Signs come to pass which *Christ* had foretold wou'd Precede its Destruction, and particularly laying hold of that Caution He gave, *Then let them that are in Judea flee to the Mountains*, and that in such Haste, as that he that was in the Field was not to Return (to *Jerusalem*) to fetch his *Garment*, or he on the *House top* there, to stay to take his *Goods* with him, accordingly all the *Christians* left
Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, and fled to Pella a City in the Mountains. And as soon as they were all gon, the Romans return'd and Renew'd the Siege. And so it came to pass, That when Titus Sack'd the City ther was not one Christian found there, and the Destruction fell only upon the Unbelieving Jews. The others Escap'd, as Lot out of Sodom, by Believing the Prediction of that Ruin.

(19.) Another very Remarkable Prediction of our Blessed Lord in that same Chapter was of the many false Christs that shou'd come after Him. And He Warn'd the Jews not to follow them, for that it wou'd be to their Destruction. Behold (says He ver. 25.) I have told you before. But they wou'd not Believe Him. And accordingly it came to pass. Josephus in his Antiquities of the Jews. l. xviii. c. 12. l. xx. c. 6. And de Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 31. tells of Abundance of these false Messiahs who Appear'd before the Destruction of Jerusalem, and led the People into the Wilderness, where they were miserably Destroy'd. The very thing of which our Saviour Caution'd them ver. 26. If they say unto you, behold, He (that is, Christ)

is

92 The Truth of Christianity

is in the Desert, go not forth. And de Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 12. Josephus says that the Chief Cause of their Obstinacy in that War with the Romans, was their Expectation of a *Messiah* to come and Deliver them, which brought on their Ruin, and made them Deaf to the Offers of *Titus* who Courted them to Peace.

And since the Destruction of *Jerusalem* ther have been so many false *Messiahs*, that *Johannes a Lent* has Wrote a History of them, Printed *Herbonæ*. 1697. Which brings them down as far as the Year 1682. And tells the Lamentable Destruction of the *Jews* in following them.

(20.) But the next Prophecy of our Blessed Lord which I produce is more Remarkable than these. And of which you see the Fulfilling in a great Measure. viz. That His Gospel shou'd Prevail over all the World, and that the Gates of Hell shou'd not Prevail against it. And this told when He was Low and Despised, and had but 12 poor *Fisher-Men* for His followers. And that His Religion shou'd Conquer, not by the Sword, like *Mahomet's*, but by Patient Suffering, as *Lambs* among *Wolves*. And
in

in this State the *Church* endur'd most Terrible *Persecutions*, when all the Rage of *Hell* was let loose against her, for the first Three Hundred Years, without any Help but from *Heaven* only; till at last, by the Divine *Providence*, the Great *Emperour* of *Rome*, and other mighty *Kings* and *Princes*, without any *Force* or *Compulsion*, did *Voluntarily* and *Freely* Submit their *Scepters* to *Christ*.

No *Religion* that ever was in the *World*, was so *Begun*, so *Propagated*, and did so *Prevail*. And hence we *Assuredly Trust* that what *Remains* will be *Fulfill'd* of the *Promise* of *Christ* to His *Church* in the *Latter Days*.

But I speak now only of this *Prophecy* so long beforehand, and when there was so little *Appearance* of its *Coming* to pass so far as we have seen already.

Let me here Remember one particular *Passage* foretold by *Christ* concerning the *Woman* who *Anointed* his *Body* to the *Burying*, That *Wheresoever* this *Gospel* shall be *Preached* throughout the whole *World*, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of,

Mark. xiv.
8, 9.

94 The Truth of Christianity

of, for a Memorial of her. And we see how it is spoken of to this Day.

DE. If this Book had been lost, we had not heard of this Prophecy.

CHR. So you may say of all the Bible. Or of any other Book. But Providence has fulfill'd this Prophecy by Preserving the Book. And it is a Prophecy that this Book, at least this Fact of the Woman, should be Preserved for Ever, and it may be Preserved tho' that Book were lost.

(21.) DE. When Prophecies are Fulfill'd, and the Events come to pass, they are Plain to every Body. But why might they not have been as Plain from the Beginning? And then ther cou'd have been no Dispute about them, as if it had been said, That such a one by Name, at such a Time, and in such a Place, shou'd do such things, &c.

CHR. Because God having given Man Free-Will, He do's not force Men to do any Wicked thing. And it wou'd be in the Power of Wicked Men to Defeat a Prophecy against themselves, as to the Circumstance of Time, Place, or the Manner of doing the thing.

For

For Example, if the *Jews* had known that *Christ* had told His *Apostles* He was to be *Crucify'd*, they wou'd not have done it. They wou'd have *Stoned* Him as they did *St. Stephen*. For that was the *Death* appointed by the *Law* for *Blasphemy*. And they several times Attempted to have *Stoned Christ* for this, because He said I am the *Son of God*. *Joh. viii. 59. x. 31, 32, 33.* But *Crucifixion* was a *Death* by the *Roman Law*. Therefore the *Jews*, to fulfil this *Prophecy* (but not knowing it) deliver'd *Christ* to the *Romans* to be put to *Death*. Yet He told them so much of it, that after He was *Crucify'd* they might know it, as He said to them, *Joh. viii. 28. When ye have lift up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He.* And *Chap. x. 32, 33. And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will Draw all Men unto Me.* This He said, signifying what *Death* He shou'd *Die*. But they Understood it not till they had done it. Then they knew what the *Lifting up* Meant. And *Chap. xviii. 31, 32.* When *Pilate* wou'd have had them *Judge Him* according to their *Law*, which was *Stoning*, they were *Cautious* at this time only, and said, *It is not lawful*

96 The Truth of Christianity

lawful for us to put any Man to Death. Because they were then under the Government of the Romans. But the next Words shew the Design of Providence in it, *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spake, signifying what Death He shou'd Die.* They had no such Caution upon them when they Stoned St. Stephen after this, nor the many times before when they took up Stones to have Stoned the same Jesus.

Then again, the Piercing His Side with the Spear was no Part of the Roman Sentence of Execution, but happen'd seemingly by meer Accident. For the Sentence of the Law was to Hang upon the Cross till they were Dead. But that being the Day of Preparation for the Sabbath, which began that Evening soon after Christ and the Thieves were fasten'd to the Cross, before it cou'd be Suppos'd they were Dead, therefore, *That the Bodies might not remain upon the Cross on the Sabbath Day,* the Jews besought Pilate that their Legs might be Broken (which was no Part of the Sentence neither, but done) lest they shou'd Escape when taken down. Accordingly the Legs of the Thieves were Broken, for they were yet Alive, and the Reason why

why they Brake not the Legs of Christ was, because *they saw that He was Dead already.* But to make Sure, one of the Soldiers *Pierc'd His Side with a Spear.* Little knowing that they were then fulfilling *Prophecies,* as that a *Bone of Him shou'd not be Broken.* And again, *They shall look on Him whom they Pierced.* As little did the Soldiers think of it when they were casting *Lots* upon His *Vesture.* And the *Chief Priests* (if they had known it or Reflected upon it) wou'd not have *Upbraided* Him in the very *Words* that were foretold in the *xxii. Psalm,* which I have before Quoted. And they wou'd have Contriv'd the *Money* they gave to *Judas* to have been one *Piece* more or less than just *Thirty.* They wou'd not have come so *Punctually* in the *Way* of that *Prophecy* *Zech. xi. 12, 13.* They *Weighed for my Price Thirty Pieces of Silver.* And they wou'd not have Bought any other *Field* with it, but especially not that of the *Potter,* which *Zechariah* there likewise Mentions.

And as the *Enemies* of Christ did not know they were fulfilling these *Prophecies* of Him, so neither did his *Disciples* at the Time when they were

98 The Truth of Christianity

so doing. As it is said, *Joh. xii. 16.* *These things Understood not his Disciples at the First; but when Jesus was Glorified, then Remembered they that these things were Written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.* This makes the Fulfilling these Prophecies yet more Remarkable.

Where Providence sees that Prophecies will not be Minded, they are more Express and Plain. As likewise where the Passions and Interests of Men will Hurry them on towards Fulfilling them. Thus Alexander the Great is Describ'd as Plainly almost as if he had been Nam'd. *Dan. viii. 20, 21, 22.* And it is said, That this Prophecy which was shew'd him by the High-Priest at Jerusalem did Encourage him in his Expedition against the Persians. But it is not so when a Man is to do Foolish and Wicked things, and things Hurtful to himself; for if these were told Plainly and Literally, it wou'd be in his Power to do otherwise; unless God should Force his Will, and then he wou'd not be a Free Agent.

(22) DE. I must have Recourse to the Jews in Answer to these Prophecies

of the *Messiah* which you have brought. For they owning these *Scriptures* as *Revelations* given them by *God*, must have some *Solution* or other for them, or else give themselves up as *Self-Condemed*.

CHR. The *Answers* the *Jews* give will *Convince* you the more, and *Render* them indeed *Self-Condemed*.

Before the *Coming* of *Christ* the *Jews* *Understood* these *Texts* as we do, to be *Certainly Meant* of the *Messiah*, and of *None* other.

But since that *Time* they have *Forced* themselves to put the most *Strained* and *Contradictory* *Meanings* upon them; For they *Agree* not in their *Expositions*, and the one does *Manifestly* *Destroy* the other.

Thus that *Text* I before *Quoted*, *Gen. xlix. 10.* was *Understood* by the *Chaldee* and *Ancient Jewish* *Interpreters* to be *Meant* of the *Messiah*.

Yet of their *Modern Rabbies* some say, That it was *Meant* of *Moses*. But others *Reject* that, *First*, Because it is *Plain* that the *Gathering* of the *Nations* or *Gentiles* was not to *Moses*. *Secondly*, Because the *Scepter* was not given to *Judah* till long after *Moses*. The first of

100 The Truth of Christianity

it that Appears was *Judg. xx. 18.* when *Judah* was Commanded by God to Go up First and Lead the Rest of the Tribes. And *David* was the First King of the Tribe of *Judah*. Thirdly, Because *Moses* did Prophecy of a Greater than Himself to come, to whom the People should Harken. *Deut. xviii. 15. 18, 19.*

For these Reasons, other *Rabbies* say it could not be Meant of *Moses*, but they Apply it to the *Tabernacle* at *Shiloh*. This was only for the Sake of the Word *Shiloh*, for otherwise it bears no Resemblance either to the Gathering of the *Gentiles*, or the Scepter of *Judah*. And tho' the House of God was first set up at *Shiloh*, yet it was Removed from Thence and Established at *Jerusalem*. Which was the Place of which *Moses* Spoke that God would place His Name there, as I shall shew you presently.

This Interpretation therefore being Rejected, other *Rabbies* say, That this Prophecy must be Meant of the *Messiah*, but that by the Word *Scepter* is not to be Understood a Scepter of Rule or Government, but of Correction and Punishment, and that this should not Depart from *Judah*.

Judah till Shiloh came. But the Text explaining Scepter by the Word Law-giver, that the Scepter should not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet until Shiloh came, Overthrows this Interpretation, and shews the Scepter here Mentioned to be Meant of a Scepter of Rule and Government. Again, Josuah gave them Rest from their Enemies round about. And the Land had Rest many Years under their Judges. And David delivered them out of the Hands of their Enemies. And under Solomon they were the Richest and Happiest People upon Earth. And frequently after they were in Good Condition and at Ease. So that the Scepter of Correction did often Depart from them before Shiloh came.

This is so Evident, that others of them Allow this Scepter to be a Scepter of Government, but they say the Meaning is, That the Scepter shall not Finally or for Ever Depart from Judah, because the Messiah will come and Restore it to Judah again. But this is Adding to the Text, and making a New Text of it, and Quite Different from the former, Nay directly Opposite to

it. For the *Text* Speaks only of the *Departing* of the *Scepter*, but *Nothing* of the *Restoring* it. And it cannot be *Restored* till once it is *Departed*. Therefore this *Exposition* saying it *shall Depart*: And the *Text* saying it *shall not Depart*. Are directly *Contrary*.

Lastly, ther are others who throw aside all these *Excuses*, and say, That the *Scepter* or *Dominion* is not yet *Departed* from *Judah*, for that some *Jew* or other may have some Sort of *Rule* or *Government*, in some Part or other of the *World*, tho' we know it not.

DE. As if the *Jews* (who hold the best *Correspondence* with one another of any *People*) could not tell this *Place*, if ther were any such where they were *Governed* by their own *Laws*, and by *Governours* of their own *Nation*, tho' in *Subjection* to the *Government* of the *Country* where they *Lived*!

These *Salvoes* of the *Jews* are *Contradictory* to each other, they are poor *Excuses*, and shew their *Cause* to be perfectly *Destitute*.

But I have an *Objection* against this *Prophecy*, which *Affects* both *Jews* and *Christians*. That the *Regal Scepter* did
Depart

Depart from the Tribe of Judah long before your Shiloh came.

CHR. First, This Prophecy does not call the Scepter a Regal Scepter, and therefore Denotes only Government in the General.

Secondly, The whole Land and the Nation took their Name from Judah. It was called the Land of Judah, and the Nation took the Name of Jews from Judah, as before that of Hebrews from Heber their Progenitor, Gen. x. 25. And this Prophecy spoke of those Times when Judah should be the Father of his Country, and the whole Nation should be Comprehended under the Name of Judah. And therefore Judah holds the Scepter wherever a Jew Governs. Besides, the Words Scepter and Throne are used in Relation to Inferiour Governours, to Tributary Kings, and Kings in Captivity; thus it is said that Thirty Seven Years after the Captivity of Judah, the King of Babylon set the Throne of Jehoiachin King of Judah above the Thrones of the Kings that were with him in Babylon. ii Kin. xxv. 27, 28. This was more than Half the Time of the Captivity. And this was Continued to Jehoiachin all the Days of his Life (ver.

104 . The Truth of Christianity

29, 30.) Which might last till the End or near the End of the Captivity. But besides the King, the Jews had Governours of their own Nation allowed them, who were their Archontes or Rulers; and they Enjoyed their own Laws, tho' in Subjection to the King of Babylon. The Elders of Judah (which was a Name of Government) are Mentioned in the Captivity, Ezek. viii. 1. And the Chief of the Fathers of Judah, and the Priests and the Levites, Ezra. i. 5. And after the Captivity, they had a Tirshatha or Governour of their own Nation, Ezra. ii. 63. Neh. viii. 9. And the Throne of the Governour is Named, Neh. iii. 7. So that here was still the Throne or Scepter of Judah.

And from the Time of the Maccabees to their Conquest by the Romans, the Supreme Authority was in their High-Priests. As it was afterwards, but in Subjection to the Romans; and they Enjoyed their own Laws. Pilate said unto them, Take ye him, and Judge him according to your Law. Joh. xviii. 31. And tho' they Answered, it is not Lawful for us to put any Man to Death, the Reason is given in the next Verse, That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He Spake, Signifying

Signifying what Death He should Die. For Crucifixion was a Roman Death, but Stoning by the Law of Moses was the Death for Blasphemy, of which they accused Him. And they afterwards Stoned St. Stephen, for the same (Alledged) Crime, according to their own Law. Their High Priests and Council had full Liberty to Meet when they pleased, and to Act according to their Law. And Christ Himself owns they Sat in Moses's Seat. Matth. xxiii. 2. The High Priest Sat to Judge St. Paul, who Applied to him that Text, Exod. xxii. 28. Thou shalt not Revile the Gods, nor Curse the Ruler of thy People, or Speak Evil of him, as the Apostle Renders it, Act. xxiii. 5. So that here the Government was still in the Jews, tho' in Subjection to the Romans. And thus it Continued till the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans. But since that time, they are Dispersed in all Countries, and have no Governour or Ruler of their own in any. The Scepter is intirely Departed from them.

DE. It is Impossible but the Jews must see the Difference of their State before the Destruction of Jerusalem and since, and of their Condition as to Government

106 The Truth of Christianity

vernment in their several Captivities, and now in their Dispersion. In the former, they had still a Face of Government left among Themselves: But now, None at all. And their Excuses which you have Mentioned, Render them indeed Self-Condemed.

What do they say to that Text you have Quoted, Jer. xxxiii. 17, &c. That David should never want a Son to Sit upon his Throne, &c. You Christians apply it to Christ, who was called the Son of David. But to whom do the Jews apply it?

CHR. Some of them, say, That David will be Raised from the Dead and made Immortal, to fulfill this Prophecy. others say, That after the Messiah, who is to be of the Seed of David, he shall thence forward no more want a Son, &c.

DE. Both these Interpretations are in flat Contradiction to the Text. The Text says, shall Never Want. These say, shall Want for a long Time, they must Confess now for near Seventeen Hundred Years together, and how much Longer they cannot tell. They have had None to Sit in Moses's Seat or on the Throne of David, tho' in Subjection

to their *Enemies*, as they had in the Worst of their *Captivities*; But have not now in their *Dispersion*.

But is ther any Difference betwixt what you call the *Cathedra* or *Seat* of *Moses*, and the *Throne* of *David*?

CHR. None as to *Government*. For *Moses* was *King* in *Jeshurun*, *Deut.* xxxiii. 5. But *David* was the First *King* of the *Tribe* of *Judah*. Which was to be the Name of the whole *Nation*. And *Christ* was Called the *King* of the *Jews*. It was the *Title* set upon His *Cross*. But after Him None ever had that *Title* to this Day.

DE. This is not to be Answered by the *Jews*. But pray what *Person* is it, do they say, was Meant in the liii. of *Isaiah* which you have Quoted?

CHR. They will not have it to be any *Person* at all. For they can find none, except our *Christ*, to whom these *Prophecies* can any way be Apply'd. Therefore they say, it must be Meant of the *Nation* of the *Jews*, whose *Sufferings*, &c. are there Describ'd in the Name of a *Person*, by which the *People* are to be Understood.

DE. But the *People* and the *Person* there Describ'd as *Suffering*, &c. are plainly

108. The Truth of Christianity

plainly Contradistinguished. It is said
ver. 8. For the Transgression of my
 PEOPLE *was* HE Striken. And *ver.*
3, 4, &c. We (the People) esteemed Him
not. All We (the People) like Sheep have
gone astray — And the Lord hath laid
on HIM the Iniquity of Us all, that is,
of the People: Who are here called
Wicked. But He is call'd My Righteous
Servant, who did no Violence, neither was
any Deceit in His Mouth. Therefore
this People and the Person here Spoke
of cou'd not be the same. They are
Oppos'd to each other. The one call'd
Righteous, the other Wicked. The one
to Die for the other, and to Justify
the other. By his knowlege shall my Righte-
ous Servant Justify Many, &c.

CHR. The Jews before Christ Came
 Understood this Prophecy of the Messiah,
 as indeed it can be Apply'd to none
 other. But the Jews since Christ, to
 Avoid the Force of this and other
 Prophecies which Speak of the Sufferings
 and Death of the Messiah, have Invented
 two Messiahs, one Ben-Joseph of the
 Tribe of Ephraim, who is to be the
 Suffering Messiah; the other Ben-David
 of the Tribe of Judah, who is to Tri-
 umph Gloriously; and shall Raise from
 the

the Dead all the *Israelites*, and among them the First *Messiah*, *Ben-Joseph*.

DE. Does the *Scripture* Speak of *Two Messiahs*, and the one Raising the other?

CHR. No. Not a Word. But only of *The Messiah*; which shews, it Spoke only of *One*. But it Mentions the *Two fold State* of this *Messiah*, the First *Suffering*, the Second *Triumphing*. Whence the Modern *Jews* have framed to themselves these *Two Messiahs*.

DE. This is Shameful! And plainly to Avoid the *Prophecies* against them.

CHR. This of *Isaiah* is fully Explain'd, *Dan. ix. 24. &c.* Where it is said that the *Messiah* the *Prince* should be Cut off, but not for Himself, but for the Transgressions of the People, to make an End of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity. And that this was to be within *Four Hundred and Ninety Years* after the Building of the *Second Temple*, which I have Mentioned before.

DE. I cannot Imagine how the *Jews* get Clear of this.

CHR. They cannot. But in Spite to it, they seek now to Under-Value the whole Book of *Daniel*, tho' they Dare

110 The Truth of Christianity

Dare not totally *Reject* it, because it was Receiv'd by their *Fore-Fathers* who Preceded *Christ*. But about a Hundred Years after *Christ*, they made a New *Distribution* of the Books of the *Old Testament*, different from their *Fathers*, and took the Book of *Daniel* out of the Middle of the *Prophets* where it was Plac'd before, and put it Last of all. But more than this, to Lessen the Credit of this Book, they Adventur'd to shake the Authority of their whole *Scriptures*. For they took upon them to make a *Distinction* of the Books of the *Scripture*, and made them not all *Inspired* or *Canonical*, but some of them they called *'Αγίασμα*, that is, *Holy* or *Pious* Books, tho' in a Lower Class than those call'd *Inspired* or *Canonical Scriptures*. And they put the Book of *Daniel* into the *Inferior* Class. But in that Book *Daniel* Speaks of Himself as having Received these *Prophecies* immediately from an *Angel* of *God*. Wherein if he told us the *Truth*, it must be put in the Highest Class of *Canonical Scripture*. But if he told us *False*, then this Book is quite through all a *Lie*; and *Blasphemous* too, in Fathering it all upon *God*! So that the *Distinction* of

our

our Modern *Jews* Confounds themselves. And since they Allow this Book of *Daniel* a Place among the *Ἀγία γράφα*, or *Holy Writings*, they cannot Deny it to be truly *Canonical*, as all their *Fathers* owned it before the Coming of *Christ*. And if they throw off *Daniel*, they must Discard *Ezekiel* too. For he gives the Highest Attestation to *Daniel* that can be given to Mortal Man; he makes him One of the *Three* most *Righteous Men* to be found in all Ages. And the very Standart of *Wisdom* to the World.

Exa. xiv.
14. 20.
xxviii. 3.

DE. What do they say to *Hag. ii. 7.* 9. Where it is said, that *Christ* was to Come into the *Second Temple*?

CHR. Some of them say, That this must be Meant of a *Temple* yet to be Built.

DE. This is Denying the *Prophecy*. For it is said *ver. 7. I will fill THIS HOUSE with Glory, &c. And ver. 9. The Glory of THIS latter House — And in THIS PLACE will I give Peace, &c.* But I am not to Defend the Cause of the *Jews*. It seems to me very Desperat. I own you *Christians* have the Advantage of them in this.

CHR.

112 The Truth of Christianity

CHR. And I hope it will have so much Effect with you, as to make you Consider Seriously of the Weight of this Argument of *Prophecy* we have Discoursed.

DE. Let us at present leave this Head of *Prophecy*. Have you any further *Evidence* to produce for your *Christ*?

(VII.) CHR. I have one more, which is yet more Peculiar to Him than even that of *Prophecy*. For whatever weak Pretence may be made of some *Prophecies* among the *Heathen*, as to some particular *Events*, of little Consequence to the World, yet they never Offer'd at that sort of *Evidence* I am next to Produce. Which is, not only *Prophecies* of the *Fact*, and that from the Beginning of the World; But also *Types*, *Resemblances*, and *Exhibitions* of the *Fact*, in outward Sensible *Institutions*, Ordain'd as *Law*, from the Beginning, and to Continue till the *Fact* they *Prefigur'd* shou'd come to pass.

(I.) Such were the *Sacrifices* Instituted by God Immediately upon the *Fall* (and upon His *Promise* of the Life-Giving Seed, Gen. iii. 15.) as *Types* of that Great

Great and only Propitiatory *Sacrifice* for *Sin* which was to Come. Whose *Blood* they saw continually *Shed* (in *Type*) in their Daily *Sacrifices*.

These were Continu'd in the *Heathen* Posterities of *Adam*, by Immemorial Tradition from the Beginning; tho' they had forgot the Beginning of them, as they had of the *World* or of *Mankind*. Yet they Retain'd so much of the Reason of them, as that they had Universally the Notion of a *Vicarious* Atonement, and that our *Sins* were to be Purg'd by the *Blood* of *Others* Suffering in *Our Stead*. As likewise, That the *Blood* of *Bulls* and *Goats* cou'd not take away *Sin*, but that a more *Noble Blood* was Necessary. Hence they came to *Human Sacrifices*. And at last to *Sacrifice* the *Greatest* most *Noble* and most *Vertuous*; And such Offered themselves to be *Sacrific'd* for the Safety of the *People*. As *Codrus* King of the *Athenians* who *Sacrific'd* himself on this Account. The like did *Curtius* for the *Romans*, as Supposing himself the *Bravest* and most *Valuable* of them all. So the *Decii*, the *Fabii*, &c. *Agamemnon* *Sacrific'd* his Daughter *Iphigenia* for the *Greek Army*. And the King of *Moab* *Sacrific'd* his *Eldest Son* that shou'd have
I Reigned

114 The Truth of Christianity

Reigned in his Stead. ii *King.* iii. 27. Thus the *Sacrificing* (not their *Servants* or *Slaves*, but) their *Children* to *Moloch* is frequently Mention'd of the *Jews*, which they did in Imitation of the *Heathen*, as it is said, *Psal.* cvi. 35, 36, 37, 38. *They were Mingled among the Heathen, and Learned their Works; and they Served their Idols — Yea, they Sacrificed their Sons and their Daughters unto the Idols of Canaan, &c.* Pursuant to which Notion, the Prophet Introduceth them Arguing thus, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and Bow my self before the High God? Shall I come before Him with Burnt Offerings, with Calves of a Year Old? Will the Lord be Pleased with Thousands of Rams, or with ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-Born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? Micha.* vi. 6, 7. They were plainly *Searching* after a Compleat and Adequat *Satisfaction* for Sin. And they thought it Necessary.

DE. No Doubt they thought so. But that did not make it Necessary.

CHR. The Doctrine of *Satisfaction* is a Subject by its self. Which I have treated elsewhere, in my *Answer* to the *Examination* of my *Last Dialogue* against the

the Socinians. But I am not Come so far with you yet. I am now only Speaking of *Sacrifices as Types of the Sacrifice of Christ.*

(2.) And besides *Sacrifices* in General, ther were afterwards some Particular *Sacrifices* Appointed more nearly Expres- sive of our *Redemption* by *Christ*. As the *Pass-over*, which was Instituted in Memory of the Redemption of the Chil- dren of *Israel* (that is, the *Church*) out of *Aegypt* (the House of Bondage of this *World*, where we are in *Servitude* to *Sin* and *Misery*) in the Night when God slew all the first-Born of the *Aegyp- tians*: But the Destroyer was to *Pass* over those Houses where he saw the Blood of the *Paschal Lamb* upon the *Door- Posts*. And it was to be Eaten with *Un-Leavened Bread*, Expressing the *Sincer- ity* of the *Heart*, without any *Mixture* or *Taint* of *Wickedness*. And thus it is Apply'd, *i Cor. v. 7, 8.* Purge out there- fore the *Old Leaven*; that ye may be a *New Lump*, as ye are *Un-Leavened*. For even *Christ* our *Pass-over* is *Sacrificed* for us. Therefore let us keep the *Feast*; not with *Old Leaven*; neither with the *Leaven* of *Malice* and *Wickedness*, but with the *Un-Leavened Bread* of *Sincerity* and *Truth*.

116 *The Truth of Christianity*

(3.) Ther was a Double *Exhibition* of *Christ* on the great Day of *Expiation*, which was but once a *Year*. On which Day only the *High Priest* enter'd into the *Holy of Holies* (which Represented *Heaven*, *Exod. xxv. 40. Wisd. ix. 8. Heb. ix. 24.*) with the *Blood* of the *Sacrifice*, whose *Body* was *Burnt* without the *Camp*; to shew *God's* Detestation of *Sin*, and that it was to be *Remov'd* far from *Us*: And that we must go out of the *Camp*, that is, out of this *World*, bearing our *Reproach* for *Sin*, before we can be Quite freed from it. See how Exactly this was Fulfill'd in *Christ*, *Heb. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14.* For the *Bodies* of those *Beasts* whose *Blood* is brought into the *Sanctuary* by the *High-Priest* for *Sin*, are *Burnt* without the *Camp*. Wherefore *Jesus* also, that He might Sanctify the *People* with His own *Blood*, Suffered without the *Gate*. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the *Camp*, bearing His *Reproach*; for here we have no *Continuing City*, but we Seek one to Come.

The other Lively Representation of *Christ's* Bearing our *Sins*, and taking them away from us, which was made on the same Day of *Expiation*, was the *Scape Goat*, *Lev. xvi. 21, 22.* And *Aaron*

shall lay both his Hands upon the Head of the Live Goat, and Confess over him all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their Transgressions in all their Sins, putting them upon the Head of the Goat, and shall send him away by the Hand of a fit Man into the Wilderness. And the Goat shall bear upon him all their Iniquities, into a Land not Inhabited: And he shall let go the Goat in the Wilderness. This is so Plain that it needs no Application.

(4.) Another Express Representation of Christ was the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, by Looking upon which the People were Cur'd of the Stings of the Fiery Serpents. So in Looking upon Christ by Faith, the Sting of the Old Serpent the Devil is taken away. And the Lifting up the Serpent did Represent Christ's being Lifted up upon the Cross. Christ Himself makes the Allusion, Joh. iii. 14. As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever Believeth in Him should not Perish, but have Eternal Life.

118 The Truth of Christianity

(5.) He was likewise Represented by the *Manna*. For He was the True *Bread* that came down from *Heaven* to Nourish Us unto *Eternal Life*. Joh. vi. 31, to 36.

(6.) As also by the *Rock* whence the *Waters* flowed out to give them Drink in the *Wilderness*. And that *Rock* was *Christ*. i Cor. x. 4.

(7.) And He was not only their *Meat* and *Drink*, but He was also their *Constant Guide*, and Led them in a *Pillar of Fire* by *Night*, and of a *Cloud* by *Day*. And the *Cloud of Glory* in the *Temple*, in which *God* *Appear'd*, was by the *Jews* Understood as a *Type* of the *Messiah*, who is the true *Shechina* or *Habitation* of *God*.

(8.) The *Sabbath* is call'd a *Shadow* of *Christ*. Col. ii. 17. It was a *Figure* of that *Eternal Rest* procur'd to us by *Christ*. Therefore it is Call'd a *Sign* of the *Perpetual Covenant*, Exod. xxxi. 16, 17. Ezek. xx. 12.

(9.) And such a *Sign* was the *Temple* at *Jerusalem*. At which *Place*, and none

none other, the *Sacrifices* of the *Jews* were to be offer'd, *Deut.* xii. 11. 13, 14. Because *Christ* was to be *Sacrific'd* there, and as a Token of it, those *Sacrifices* which were *Types* of *Him* were to be Offer'd only *There*.

And so Great Strefs was laid upon this, That no *Sin* of the *Jews* is oftner Remember'd than their Breach of this Command. It was a Blot set upon their several *Reformations*, otherwise Good and Commendable in the Sight of God, That the *High-Places* (where they us'd to *Sacrifice*) were not taken away. This is Mark'd as the Great Defect in the Reformation of *Asa*, i *Kin.* xv. 14. of *Jehoshaphat*, i *Kin.* xxii. 43. of *Jehoash*, ii *Kin.* xii. 3. of *Amaziah*, ii *Kin.* xv. 4. of *Jotham*, ver. 35. But they were taken away by *Hezekiah*, ii *Kin.* xviii. 4. And the People Instructed to *Sacrifice* and burn *Incense* at *Jerusalem* only. ii *Chr.* xxxii. 12. *Isai.* xxxvi. 7.

Ther was likewise a further Design of Providence in Limiting their *Sacrifices* to *Jerusalem*, which was, That after the Great Propitiatory *Sacrifice* of *Christ* had been once Offer'd there, God

120 *The Truth of Christianity*

was to Remove the *Jews* from *Jerusalem*, that they might have no *Sacrifice* at all (as, for that Reason, they have not had in any Part of the World near these *Seventeen Hundred Years* past) to Instruct them, That (as the *Apostle* Speaks to them, *Heb. x. 26*) *ther Remaineth no more* (or other) *Sacrifice* for *Sins*. And since by the *Law* their *Sins* were to be *Purged* by *Sacrifice*, they have now no way to *Purge* their *Sins*; to *Force* them (as it were) to look back upon that only *Sacrifice* which can *Purge* their *Sins*. And till they Return to *That*, they must have no *Sacrifice* at all, but *Die* in their *Sins*. As *Jesus* said unto them, *I go my way, and ye shall Die in your Sins*. — For if ye believe not that I am *He*, ye shall *Die* in your *Sins*. *Joh. viii. 21. 24.*

And *Daniel* Prophecy'd expressly, That soon after the *Death* of the *Messiah*, the *City* of *Jerusalem* and the *Sanctuary* should be *Destroy'd*, and that the *Sacrifice* shou'd *Cease*, even until the *Consummation*, and that *Determined* shall be poured upon the *Desolate*. *Dan. ix. 26, 27.*

And this *Desolation* of theirs, and what was *Determin'd* upon them, was told them likewise by *Hosea*, Chap. iii.

4. For the Children of Israel shall abide many Days without a King, and without a Prince, and without a Sacrifice. But he says in the next Verse, That in the Latter Days they shall Return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King. That is, the Son of David their Prince and Messiah. As he is Call'd Messiah the Prince, Dan. ix. 25.

Thus as Salvation was of the Jews, because Christ was to come of them; so this Salvation was only to be had at Jerusalem, where He was to Suffer, and by which only Salvation was to be had.

(10.) DE. This Argument is to the Jews. And if I were a Jew it wou'd move me, because they never were so long before without King, Temple, or Sacrifice.

CHR. But the Prophecies of it, and these Fulfilled as you have seen; and Christ being so plainly Pointed at, and the Place of His Passion, by Limiting the Sacrifices to Jerusalem only; And by that Causing the Legal Sacrifices to Cease throughout the World, to shew that they were Fulfill'd: All this is a Strong Evidence to you of the Truth

122 The Truth of Christianity

Truth of these things, and of our Jesus being the Messiah, or Christ, who was Prophecy'd of.

DE. I cannot Deny but ther is something Remarkable in this, which I will take time to Consider. But I do not see how the Jews can stand out against this. Because this Mark given by Daniel of the Messiah, that soon after his Death the Sacrifice shou'd Cease, cannot Agree to any after Messiah who shou'd now Come so many Ages after the Sacrifice has Ceas'd.

CHR. Since we have fallen into the Subject of the Jews, I will give you another Prophecy which cannot be fulfill'd in any after Messiah whom the Jews expect. And it will be also a Confirmation to you of the Truth of the Prophecies of the Holy Scriptures.

Thus God speaks, Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21, 22. Thus saith the Lord, if you can Break my Covenant of the Day, and my Covenant of the Night, and that ther shou'd not be Day and Night in their Season: Then may also my Covenant be Broken with David my Servant, that he should not have a Son to Reign upon his Throne; And with the Levites the Priests, my Ministers. As the Host of Heaven cannot be Nambred, neither

ther the Sand of the Sea Measured: So will I multiply the Seed of David my Servant, and the Levites that Minister unto me.

Now let the *Jews* tell in which *Son of David* this is Fulfill'd, except only in our *Christ*.

And how this is made Good to the *Priests* and *Levites*, otherwise than as *Isaiah* Prophecy'd Chap. lxvi. 21. *And I will also take of them (the Gentiles) for Priests and for Levites, saith the Lord.* And as it is thus Apply'd i *Pet.* ii. 5. 9. and *Rev.* i. 6. And this *Evangelical Priesthood* is Multiply'd as the *Stars of Heaven*, (which they are frequently call'd) not like the *Tribe of Levi*, which cou'd not Afford *Priests* to all the *Earth*.

And as I said before of *Jerusalem* and the *Sacrifices* there, that they are Ceas'd, to shew they are Fulfill'd: So here, after this *Son of David* was Come, all his other *Sons* Ceas'd, and the very *Genealogy* of their *Tribes*, and so of *Judah*, is lost, as also of the *Tribe of Levi*; so that the *Jews* can never tell, if any after *Messiah* shou'd appear, whether he were of the *Tribe of Judah*, far less, whether he were of the *Lineage of David*; Nor can they shew the *Genealogy* of

124 The Truth of Christianity

of any they call *Levites* now among them.

This is Occasion'd by their being *Dispers'd* among all *Nations*, and yet *Preserv'd* a Distinct People from all the Earth, tho' without any *Country* of their own, or *King*, or *Priest*, or *Temple*, or *Sacrifice*. And they are thus *Preserved* by the *Providence* of God, (so as never any *Nation* was since the Foundation of the World) to shew the *Fulfilling* of the *Prophecies* concerning them, and the *Judgments* Pronounced against them for their *Crucifying* their *Messiah*; And that their *Conversion* may be more Apparent to the World, and their being Gather'd out of all *Nations*, and Restor'd to *Jerusalem* (as is Promis'd them) when they shall come to Acknowledge their *Messiah*.

And God not Permitting them to have any *King* or *Governour* upon Earth, ever since their last *Dispersion* by the *Romans* (lest they might say, That the *Scepter* was not Departed from *Judah*) is to Convince them (when God shall take the *Vail* off their *Heart*) That no other *Messiah* who can Come hereafter can Answer this *Prophecy* of *Jeremiah*, or that

that of *Jacob*, that the *Scepter* should not Depart from *Judah* till *Shiloh* came.

(11.) And it is Wonderful to Consider how Expressly their Present State is *Prophecy'd* of, that it cou'd not be more *Literal*, if it were to be Worded now by us who see it. As that they shou'd be *Scatter'd* into all *Countries*, *Sifted* as with a *Sieve* among all *Nations*, yet *Preserv'd* a *People*; And that *God* wou'd make an utter End of those *Nations* who had oppress'd them, and Blot out their *Names* from under *Heaven* (As we have seen it Fulfill'd upon the Great *Empires* of the *Assyrians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Romans*, who one after the other had Miserably Wasted the *Jews*) But that the *Name* of the *Jews*, (the *Fewest* and the *Poorest* of all *Nations*) shou'd Remain for Ever, and they a *People* Distinct from all the *Nations* in the World, tho' *Scatter'd* among them all. Read the *Prophecies* Express upon this Point. *Jer.* xxx. 11. xxxi. 36, 37. xxxiii. 24, 25, 26. xli. 28. *Isai.* xxvii. 7. xxix. 7, 8. liv. 9, 10. lxxv. 8. *Ezek.* vi. 8. xi. 16, 17. xii. 15, 16. *Amos.* ix. 8, 9. *Zech.* x. 9. And it was fore-told them long before, That thus it wou'd be

126 The Truth of Christianity

be. *Lev. xxvi. 44.* and this *in the Latter Days. Deut. iv. 27. 30. 31.* Thus *Moses* told them of it so long before, as the *after Prophets* frequently. And you see all these *Prophecies* Literally *Fulfill'd* and *Fulfilling*. The like cannot be said of any other *Nation* ever was upon the *Earth!* So *Destroy'd*, and so *Preserv'd*. And for so long a *Time!* Having Worn out all the *Great Empires* of the *World*, and still *Surviving* them! To fulfil what was further *Prophecy'd* of them to the *End of the World!*

DE. I cannot say but ther is something very Surprizing in this. I never Thought of it before. It is a *Living Prophecy*, which we see *Fulfilled* and still *Fulfilling* at this Day before our Eyes. For we are Sure these *Prophecies* were not *Coin'd Yesterday*. And they are as *Express* and *Particular*, as if they were to be Wrote now, after the *Events* are so far come to pass.

(12.) CHR. As the *Door* was kept *Open* to *Christ* before He came, by the many and *Flagrant Prophecies* of Him; and by the *Types* Representing Him: So was the *Door* for Ever *Shut* after Him, by those *Prophecies* being all *Ful-*
fill'd.

fill'd and Compleated in Him, and Applicable to none who shou'd come after Him; And by all the *Types* Ceasing, the *Shadows* Vanishing when the *Substance* was come. No *Messiah* can come now, before the *Scepter* depart from *Judah*, and the *Sacrifice* from *Jerusalem*. Before the *Sons* of *David* (all except *Christ*) shall Cease to Sit upon his *Throne*. None can come now, within *Four Hundred and Ninety Years* of the *Building* of the *Second Temple*; nor Come into *That* very *Temple*, as I have before shew'd was expresly *Prophecy'd* by *Daniel* and *Haggai*.

DE. I know not what the *Jews* can say, who own these *Prophecies*.

CHR. They say, That the Coming of the *Messiah* at the Time Spoke of in the *Prophets*, has been Delay'd because of their *Sins*.

DE. Then it may be Delay'd for Ever, unless they can tell us when they will grow Better. But however these *Prophecies* have failed which Spoke of the *Time* of the *Messiah's* Coming. And And they can never be a Proof hereafter, because the *Time* is past. So that, according to this, they were made for no Purpose; unless to shew that they were

128 *The Truth of Christianity*

were *False*, that is, no *Prophecies* at all!

But were these *Prophecies* upon *Condition*? Or was it said that the Coming of the *Messiah* should be Delay'd if the *Jews* were *Sinful*?

CHR. No. So far from it, That it was expressly *Prophecy'd* that the Coming of the *Messiah* shou'd be in the most *Sinful* State of the *Jews*, and to *Purge* their *Sins*. *Dan.* ix. 24. *Zech.* xiii. 1. And the Ancient Tradition of the *Jews* was pursuant to this, That at the Coming of the *Messiah* the *Temple* should be a *Den* of *Thieves*. Rabbi *Juda* in *Masoreta*. And a Time of great *Corruption*. *Talmud.* tit. de *Synedrio* and de *Ponderibus*, &c.

But more than this, the very Case is put of their being most *Sinful*, and it is Expressly said, That this should not hinder the Fulfilling of the *Prophecies* concerning the Coming of the *Messiah*, Spoke of as the *Son* of *David*. ii *Sam.* vii. 14, 15, 16. *Psal.* lxxxix. 30. 33. to 37.

But it was *Prophecy'd* that they should not Know their *Messiah*, and should *Reject* Him when He came; that He should be a *Stone* of *Stumbling*, and a *Rock* of *Offence* to them. *Isai.* viii. 14, 15. And that
their

their Eyes should be Closed, that they should not Understand their own Prophets. Chap. xxix, 9, 10, 11. That their Builders should Reject the Head Stone of the Corner. Psal. cxviii. 22. And the like in several other Places of their own Prophets. And thus they Mistook the Prophecy concerning the Coming of Elias, whom it is said they Knew not, but did to Him what they listed, and so the same of Christ. Matth. xvii. 12. And it is said, i Cor. 2. 8. That had they known it, they would not have Crucified the Lord of Glory.

DE. This indeed Solves the Prophecies, both those of the Coming of the Messiah, and of the Jews not Knowing Him, and therefore Rejecting Him. And likewise Obviates this Excuse of theirs, for if they were very Sinful at that Time, it was a Greater Punishment of their Sin not to Know, and to Reject their Messiah, than His not Coming at that Time would have been,

CHR. The great Sin mentioned for which they were Punished by several Captivities, was their Idolatry, the Last and Longest of which Captivities was that of Seventy Years in Babylon. Since which time they have forsaken their

K

Idolatry

130 The Truth of Christianity

Idolatry, and have never been *Nationally* Guilty of it since, but always had it in the utmost Abhorrence. But since their Rejecting their *Messiah*, they have been now near *Seventeen Hundred Years*, not in a *Captivity*, where they might be all together, and Enjoying their own *Law, Government, and Worship*, in some Manner; but *Dispersed* over all the World, without *Country* of their own, or *King, or Priest, or Temple, or Sacrifice*, or any *Prophet* to Comfort them, or give them *Hopes* of a *Restoration*. And all this come upon them, not for their Old *Sin* of *Idolatry*, but from that *Curse* they *Imprecated* upon themselves, when they *Crucified* their *Messiah*, saying, *His Blood be on Us, and on our Children*. Which Cleaves unto them from that Day to this, and is Visible to all the World, but to Themselves! And what other *Sin* can they think Greater than *Idolatry*, for which they have been *Punished* so much more Terribly than for all their *Idolatries*; what other *Sin* can this be, but their *Crucifying* their *Messiah*! And here they may see their *Sinful* State, which they *Allege* as an *Excuse* for their *Messiah's* not *Coming* at the *Time* foretold by the *Prophets*, re-
dred

dred ten Fold more *Sinful*, by their *Rejecting* Him when He came

DE. This is a full *Answer*, and *Convincing* as to the *Jews*. But have you any more to say to me?

(13.) CHR. I have one thing more to Offer, which may come under this Head of *Types*, and that is, *Persons* who Represented *Christ* in several Particulars, and so might be Call'd *Personal Types*.

And I will not Apply these out of my own Head, But as they are Apply'd in the *New Testament*, which having all the *Marks* of the *Old Testament*, and Stronger *Evidence* than these, in those *Marks* we are now upon, their Authority is Indisputable.

(1.) I begin with *Adam*, who gave us *Life*, and *Death* too. And *Christ* came by His *Death* to Restore us to *Life* again, even *Life Eternal*. Hence *Christ* is call'd the *Second Adam*, and *Adam* is call'd the *Figure of Christ*. The Parallel betwixt them is Insisted on, *Rom. v. 12.* to the End, and *1 Cor. xv. 45.* to *50.* *Eve* receiv'd her *Life* from *Adam*, as the *Church* from *Christ*. She was taken out of the *Side of Adam* when he was in a *Dead Sleep*; and after *Christ* was *Dead*, the *Sacraments* of

132 *The Truth of Christianity*

Water and *Blood* flow'd out of His *Side*, that is, *Baptism* whereby we are *Born* into *Christ*, and the *Sacrament* of His *Blood*, whereby we are *Nourish'd* into *Eternal Life*.

(2.) *Enoch* was Carry'd up *Bodily* into *Heaven*. As *Elijah*. One under the *Patriarchal*, the other under the *Legal* Dispensation. In both, the *Ascension* of *Christ* was *Prefigured*.

(3.) *Noah*, a *Preacher* of *Righteousness* to the *Old World*, and *Father* of the *New*. Who Sav'd the *Church* by *Water*, the like *Figure* whereunto even *Baptism* doth also now save Us, *i Pet. iii. 20, 21*.

(4.) *Melchisedeck*, that is, *King* of *Righteousness*, and *King* of *Peace*, and *Priest* of the most *High God*; who was made like unto the *Son of God*, a *Priest* continually, *Heb. vii. 1, 2, 3*.

(5.) *Abraham*, the *Friend* of *God*, and *Father* of the *Faithful*, the *Heir* of the *World*, *Rom. iv. 13*. In whom all the *Nations* of the *Earth* are *Blessed*, *Gen. xviii. 18*.

(6.) *Isaac*, the *Heir* of this *Promise*, was *Born* after his *Father* and *Mother* were both past the *Age* of *Generation* in the *Course* of *Nature*, *Gen. xvii. 17*.

xviii.

xviii. 11. Rom. iv. 19. Heb. xi. 11, 12. The nearest *Type* that cou'd be to the Generation of *Christ* wholly without a Man.

And his *Sacrifice* had a very near Resemblance to the *Sacrifice* and *Death* of *Christ*, who lay Three Days in the *Grave*, and *Isaac* was Three Days a *Dead Man* (as we say in *Law*) under the *Sentence* of *Death*, Gen. xxii. 4. whence *Abraham* Received him in a *Figure*, Heb. xi. 19. that is, of the *Resurrection* of *Christ*. And *Abraham* was Commanded to go Three Days Journey to *Sacrifice Isaac* upon the same Mountain (according to the Ancients) where *Christ* was *Crucify'd*, and where *Adam* was *Bury'd*. Again the Common Epithet of *Christ*, i. e. *The only Begotten of the Father*, and His *Beloved Son*, were both given to *Isaac*, Gen. xxii. 2. Heb. xi. 17. For he was the *only Son* that was *Begotten* in that *Miraculous* Manner, after both his *Parents* were *Decay'd* by *Nature*. And he was the *only Son* of the *Promise*, which was not made to the *Seed* of *Abraham* in General, but in *Isaac* shall thy *Seed* be called, Gen. xxi. 12. He saith not, And to *Seeds*, as of many,

134 The Truth of Christianity

many, but as of one. And to thy Seed, which is Christ. Gal. iii. 16.

And as Isaac, which signifies *Rejoicing*, or *Laughing* for Joy, was thus the only Begotten of his Parents, so Abram signifies the *Glorious Father*, and Abraham (into which his Name was Chang'd on the Promise of Isaac, Gen. xvii. 5. 16.) signifies the *Father* of a *Multitude*, to Express the coming in of the *Gentiles* to Christ, and the Encrease of the Gospel; whence it is there said to Abraham, a *Father of many Nations* have I made thee. And in thy Seed all the Nations of the Earth shall be Blessed.

Isaac who was Born by Promise of a Free-Woman, Represented the *Christian Church*, in Opposition to Ishmael who was Born after the Flesh, of a Bond-Maid, and Signify'd the *Jewish Church* under the Law. See this Allegory carry'd on, Gal. iv. 21. to the End.

(7.) Jacob his Vision of the Ladder (Gen. xxviii. 12.) Shews the Intercourse which was open'd by Christ betwixt Heaven and Earth, by His making Peace. And to this He alludes when He says, Hereafter you shall see Heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. Joh. i. 51. And

And *Jacob's Wrestling with the Angel* (Gen. xxxii. 24, &c. Hof. xii. 4.) And as it were *Prevailing* over Him by *Force* to *Bless* him, shews the *Strong* and *Powerful Intercession* of *Christ*. Whereby (as He Words it, *Matth. xi. 12.*) *Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force*. Whence the Name of *Jacob* was then turn'd to *Israel*, that is, one who *Prevails* upon *God*, or has *Power* over Him. *God* Representing Himself here as *Overcome* by Us. And the Name of *Israel* was ever after given to the *Church*. But much more so when *Christ* came, as He said, *Matth. xi. 12. From the Days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, &c.* that is, from the first Promulgation of *Christ* being Come. Thenceforward the *Gentiles* began to Press into the *Gospel*, and as by *Force* to take it from the *Jews*. This was Signify'd in the Name *Jacob*, that is, a *Supplanter*, for the *Gentiles* here Supplanted their *Elder Brother* the *Jews*, and Stole the *Blessing* and *Heirship* from them.

(8.) *Joseph* was Sold by his *Brethren* out of *Envy*. But it prov'd the *Preservation* of them and all their *Families*.

136 The Truth of Christianity

And *Christ* was Sold by His Brethren out of Envy, *Mark. xv. 10.* which prov'd the Means of their *Redemption*. And *Christ*, as *Joseph*, became Lord over His Brethren.

(9.) *Moses* calls *Christ* a Prophet like unto Himself. *Deut. xviii. 18.* He Represented *Christ* the Great Law-giver. And his Delivering *Israel* out of *Aegypt*, was a Type of *Christ's* Delivering His Church from the Bondage of Sin and Hell.

(10.) *Josuah*, call'd also *Jesus*, *Heb. iv. 8.* overcame all the Enemies of *Israel*, and gave them Possession of the Holy Land, which was a Type of Heaven. And *Christ* Appeared to *Josua*, as Captain of the Host of the Lord. *Jos. v. 14.* So that *Josuah* was His Lieutenant Representing Him.

(11.) *Sampson*, who by his single Valour and his own Strength overcame the *Philistines*, and slew more at his Death than in all his Life, was a Representation of *Christ*, who Trod the Wine-press alone, and of the People ther was none with Him, but His own Arm brought Him Salvation. *Isai. lxiii. 3. 5.* But His Death Compleated His Victory, whereby He overcame all the Power of the Enemy, And having Spoil'd Principalities and Powers, He

He made a Shew of them openly, Triumphant over them in His Cross. Col. ii. 15.

(12.) *David*, whose Son **CHRIST** is Call'd, Speaks frequently of Him in his own *Person*, and in Events which cannot be Apply'd to *David*, as *Psal. xvi. 10. Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor suffer thine Holy one to see Corruption.* For *David* has seen Corruption. *Christ* is said to Sit upon the *Throne of David.* *Isai. ix. 7.* And *Christ* is call'd by the Name of *David*, *Hos. iii. 5.* and frequently in the *Prophets.*

David from a *Shepherd* became a *King* and a *Prophet*, Denoting the *Threefold Office of Christ, Pastoral, Regal, and Prophetical.*

(13.) *Solomon*, the *Wise*st of Men, his *Peaceable* and *Magnificent* *Reign*, Represented the *Triumphal State of Christ's Kingdom*, which is Describ'd, *Psal. lxxii.* (*Inscrib'd for Solomon*, there call'd the *King's Son*) but far Exceeding the *Glory* of his *Reign*, or what can possibly be Apply'd to him, as *ver. 5. 8. 11. 17.* But his *Reign* came the nearest of any to that *Universal and Glorious* *Reign* there Describ'd, particularly in his being Chosen to Build the *Temple*, because he was a Man of *Peace* and had Shed

138 The Truth of Christianity

no Blood, like David his Father, who Conquer'd the Enemies of Israel, but Solomon Built the Church, in full Peace; and as it is Particularly set down i Kin. vi. 7. and no Doubt he was Order'd by God so to do, *That the House when it was in Building, was Built of Stone made Ready before it was brought thither: So that there was neither Hammer nor Ax, nor any Tool of Iron heard in the House while it was in Building.* Which did Denote that the Church of Christ was to be Built, not only in Peace, but without Noise or Confusion, as Isaiah Prophecy'd of him, chap. xlii. 2. *He shall not Cry, nor Lift up, nor cause His voice to be Heard in the street: a bruised Reed shall He not break, &c.* He was not to Conquer with the Sword, as the Israelites Subdued Canaan, but to overcome by Meekness, and doing Good to His Enemies, and Patiently Suffering all Injuries from them. And so He taught His followers, as St. Paul says, ii Tim. ii. 24. *The Servant of the Lord must not Strive but be Gentle unto all Men — In Meekness Instructing those that Oppose themselves, &c.*

And I cannot think but ther was some Imitation of this Peaceable Temple of Solomon, in the Temple of Janus among

among the *Romans*; for that was never to be *Shut* but in Time of *Peace*. Which happen'd Rarely among them, but three Times in all their *History*. The last was in the Reign of *Augustus*, in which time *Christ* came into the World, when ther was a Profound and Universal *Peace*. And so it became the Prince of *Peace*, whose *Birth* was thus Proclaim'd by the *Angels*, Luk. ii. 14. *Glory to God on High, and on Earth Peace, good Will towards Men*. But to go on.

(14.) *Jonah's* being three Days and Nights in the Belly of the *Whale*, was a Sign of *Christ's* being so long in the Heart of the *Earth*. *Christ* Himself makes the Allusion. *Matth.* xii. 40.

(15.) But as ther were several Persons, at several Times, Representing and Prefiguring several Particulars of the Life and Death of *Christ*: So ther was one Standing and Continual Representation of Him appoiated in the Person of the *High-Priest* under the *Law*. Who entering into the *Holy of Holies* once in a Year, with the Blood of the Great Expiatory Sacrifice, and He only, to make Attonement for Sin, did Lively Represent our Great *High-Priest* Entering into Heaven, once for all, with His own Blood,

140 *The Truth of Christianity*

to *Expiate* the *Sins* of the whole *World*. This is largely Insisted upon in the *Epistle* to the *Hebrews*. Chap. vii. viii. ix. x.

And our Deliverance by the Death of *Christ* is Represented, as in a *Picture*, in that Ordinance of the *Law*, That the *Man-slayer* who fled to one of the *Cities* of *Refuge*, (which were all of the *Cities* of the *Levites*) shou'd not Come out thence till the *Death* of the *Higb-Priest*, and no *Satisfaction* be taken till then, and then he shou'd be *Acquitted* and *Return into the Land of his Possession*. Num. xxxv. 6. 25, 26, 27, 28.

And I doubt not but the *Gentiles* had from hence their *Asyla* or *Temples* of *Refuge* for *Criminals*.

(I.) DE. Ther is a *Resemblance* in these things. But I wou'd not have admitted them as a *Proof*, if you had not supported them, at least most of them, with the Authority of the *New-Testament*. And it was not Necessary that every one should be Named in it; for those that are Named are only Occasionally. And I must take time to Consider of the *Evidences* you have brought for the Authority of the *New-Testament*, which you have made full as Great, if not Greater than the *Evidences* for the *Old Testament*. CHR.

CHR. I may say Greater upon this Head of *Prophecies* and *Types*, because these are no *Proofs* till they are *Fulfilled*. Tho' then they *Prove* the *Truth* of these *Prophecies* and *Types*. And so the one Confirms the other. But the whole *Evidence* of the *Law* is not made *Apparent* till we see it *Fulfilled* in the *Gospel*. For which Reason I call the *Gospel* the Strongest *Proof*, not only as to it self, but likewise as to the *Law*. And the *Jews*, as much as in them lyes, have Invalidated this Strongest *Proof* for the *Old Testament*, which is the *Fulfilling* of it in the *New*. Nay they have Rendered these *Prophecies* false, which they say were not *Fulfilled* at the *Time* they spake of, and never now can be *Fulfilled*. And as no *Fact* but that of our *Christ* alone ever had this *Evidence* of *Prophecies* and *Types* from the Beginning, so never can any other *Fact* have it now while the World lasts.

(2.) DE. Why do you say, *Never can have it*? For may not God make what *Fact* He pleases, and give it what *Evidence* He pleases?

CHR. But it cannot have the *Evidence* that the *Fact* of *Christ* has, unless at that Distance of Time hereafter, as from

142 The Truth of Christianity

from the Beginning of the *World* to this Day. Because *God* took Care that the *Evidence* of *Christ* should Commence from the very Beginning, in the *Promise* of Him made to *Adam*, and to be Renewed by the *Prophets* in all the after *Ages* till He should Come. And the *Evidence* of Him after His Coming (in which I have Instanc'd) and which Continues to this Day, before it can belong to any other, must have the same Compass of *Time* that has gone to Confirm this *Evidence*, else it has not the same *Evidence*.

(3.) DE. By this Argument the *Evidence* grows Stronger the longer it Continues, since you say, That the *Prophecies* of the *Scriptures* Reach to the End of the World, And so will be further and further *Fulfilling* every Day.

This is Contrary to what one of your *Doctors* has lately Advanced, who Pretends to Calculate the *Age* of *Evidences*, That in such a *Time* they Decay, and in such a *Time* must Die. And that the *Evidence* of *Christianity* having Lasted so Long, is upon the Decay, and must Wear out Soon, if not Supply'd by some Fresh and New *Evidence*.

Craig. Theologia
Christianæ Principia
Mathematica.
1699.

CHR.

CHR. This may be true as to *Fables* which have no Foundation. But is that *Prophecy* I mention'd to you, of the *Dispersion* and yet wondrous *Preservation* of the *Jews*, less *Evident* to you, because it was made so long ago?

DE. No. It is much more *Evident* for that. If I had Liv'd at the Time when those *Prophecies* were made, I fancy I shou'd not have Believed one Word of them; But wonder'd at the *Assurance* of those who Ventur'd to foretel such *Improbable* and almost *Impossible* things.

And I should have thought the same of what you have told me of your *Christ*, foretelling the Progress of his *Gospel*, at the first so very slender *Appearance* of it, and by such *Weak* and *Improbable Means*, as only *Suffering* and *Dying* for it, which to me would have seem'd perfect *Despair*, and a giving up the Cause.

I should have thought of them (as of others) who *Prophecy* of things after their *Time*, that they might not be *Contradicted* while they *Liv'd*.

But my seeing so much of these *Prophecies* concerning the *Jews*, and the *Progress* of the *Gospel*, come to pass so long Time after, is the only thing that makes me lay *Stress* upon them, and which makes them seem *Wonderful* to me.

CHR.

144 *The Truth of Christianity*

CHR. When the *Prophecies* shall all be fully Completed at the End of the World, they will then seem *Strongest* of all. They will then be *Undeniable*, when *Christ* shall visibly *Descend* from *Heaven* (in the same Manner as He *Ascended*) to Execute both what He has *Promis'd* and *Threaten'd*. And in the mean time, the *Prophecies* lose none of their Force, but their *Evidence* Encreases, as *the Light Shineth more and more unto the perfect Day*.

(VIII.) DE. I observe you have made no use of that Common *Topick* of the *Truth* and *Sincerity* of the *Pen-Men* of the *Scriptures*, and what *Interest* they cou'd have in Setting up these things if they had been *False*. For this can Amount at most but to a *Probability*. And you having produc'd those *Evidences* which you think *Infallible*, it might seem a Lessening of your *Proof* to Insist upon bare *Probabilities*. So that I suppose you give that up.

(I.) No, SIR, I give it not up, tho' I have not made it the chief *Foundation* of my *Argument*. And if it were but a *Probability*, it wants not its Force, for it is thought Unreasonable to deny a flagrant *Probability*, where ther is not as strong a
Probability

Probability on the other Side, for then that makes a *Doubt*. But otherwise, Men generally are Satisfy'd with *Probabilities*, for that is the greatest Part of our Knowledge. If we will Believe nothing but what Carries an Infallible *Demonstration* along with it, we must be *Scepticks* in most things in the World. And such were never thought the *Wiseſt* Men.

But besides, a *Probability* may be ſooner Discern'd by ſome than the *Infallibility* of a *Demonstration*. Therefore we muſt not lay aſide *Probabilities*.

But in this Caſe, I think ther is an *Infallible* Affurance, as *Infallible* as the *Senſes* of all Mankind. And I ſuppoſe you will not Ask a Greater.

(2.) DE. How can you ſay that? When the Suffering of *Afflictions*, and *Death* it ſelf, is but a *Probability* of the Truth of what is told Us. Becauſe ſome have Suffer'd *Death* for *Errours*.

CHR. But then they thought them *True*. And Men may be *Deceiv'd* in their *Judgments*, we ſee many Examples of it. But if the *Facts* Related be ſuch, as that it is *Impoſſible* for thoſe who tell them to be *Impos'd* upon themſelves, or for thoſe to whom they are told to *Believe* them, if not *True*, without Suppoſing an Uni-

146 The Truth of Christianity

verfal *Deception* of the *Senses* of Mankind, then I hope I have brought the Case up to that Infallible *Demonstration* I promis'd. And this is the Case of the *Facts* Related in Holy *Scripture*. They were told by those who *Saw* them, and *Did* them, and they were told to those who *Saw* them likewise themselves; And the *Relators* Appeal'd to this. So that here cou'd be no *Deceit*.

DE. I grant ther is a great Difference betwixt *Errours* in *Opinion*, and in *Fact*. And that such *Facts* as are told of *Moses* and of *Christ*, cou'd not have pass'd upon the *People* then *Alive*, and who were said to have seen them. And I find that both *Moses*, *Christ*, and the *Apostles* did Appeal to what the *People* they Spoke to had *Seen* themselves.

CHR. With this Consideration, their Patient *Suffering* even unto *Death* for the *Truth* of what they Taught, will be a full *Demonstration* of the *Truth* of it.

(3.) Add to this, That their *Enemies* who *Persecuted* them, the *Romans* as well as *Jews*, to whom they Appeal'd as *Witnesses* of the *Facts*, did not Offer to Deny them.

That none of the *Apostates* from *Christianity* did Attempt to *Detect* any *Falshood*

in

in the *Facts*; tho' they might have had great *Rewards* if they cou'd have done it. The *Roman Emperours* being then *Persecutors* of *Christianity*, and for *Three Hundred Years* after *Christ*. And *Julian* the *Emperor* afterwards turn'd *Apostate*, who had been Initiated in the *Sacra* of *Christianity*, yet cou'd not be *Dereft* any of the *Facts*.

(4.) And it was a particular *Providence* for the further *Evidence* of *Christianity*, That all the *Civil Governments* in the *World* were against it for the first *Three Hundred Years*, lest it might be said (as it is *Ridiculously* in your *Amintor*) That the *Awe* of the *Civil Government* might hinder those who cou'd make the *Detection*.

Now, *SIR*, to Apply all that we have said, I desire you wou'd Compare these *Evidences* I have brought for *Christianity*, with those that are Pleaded for any other *Religion*.

There are but *Four* in the *World*, viz. *Christianity*, *Judaism*, *Heathenism*, and *Mahometism*.

(1.) *Christianity* was the *First*. For from the first *Promise* of *Christ* made to *Adam*, during the *Patriarchal* and *Legal* *Dispensations*, all was *Christianity* in *Type*, as I have shew'd.

148 The Truth of Christianity

And as to *Moses* and the *Law*, the *Jews* can give no *Evidence* for that, which will not equally *Establish* the Truth of *Christ* and the *Gospel*. Nor can they *Disprove* the *Facts* of *Christ* by any *Topick*, which will not likewise *Disprove* all those of *Moses* and the *Prophets*. So that they are *Hedg'd* in on every *Side*. They must either *Renounce Moses*, or *Acknowledge Christ*.

Moses and the *Law* have the first *Five* *Evidences*, but they have not the *Sixth* and the *Seventh* which are the *Strongest*.

This is as to *Judaism* before *Christ* came. But since, as it now *Stands* in *Opposition* to *Christianity*, in favour of any future *Messiah*, it has none of the *Evidences* at all. On the *Contrary*, their own *Prophecies* and *Types* make against them, for their *Prophecies* are *Fulfilled*, and their *Types* are *Ceas'd*, and cannot belong to any other *Messiah* who should come hereafter. They *Stand* now more *Naked* than the *Heathens* or the *Mahometans*.

(2.) Next for *Heathenism*, some of the *Facts* recorded of their *Gods* have the first and second *Evidences*, and some the *Third*, but not one of them the *Fourth*, or any of the other *Evidences*.

But

But

if
the
all
Ex
the
Ele
Par
into
the
Th
Vic
Wif
You
who
Liar
had
A
mad
Gods
by a
Vesta
his N
was
pair
Wing
thing
Child
Time
ons.

But truly and properly Speaking, and if we will take the Opinion of the *Heathens* themselves, they were no *Facts* at all, but Mythological *Fables*, Invented to Express some Moral *Vertues* or *Vices*, or the History of *Nature*, and Power of the *Elements*, &c. As likewise to turn great Part of the *History* of the *Old Testament* into *Fable*, and make it their own, for they Disdain'd to borrow from the *Jews*. They made *Gods* of *Men*, and the most *Vicious* too. In so much that some of their *Wise Men* thought it a Corruption of Youth, to Read the *History* of their *Gods*, whom they Represented as Notorious *Liars*, *Thieves*, *Adulterers*, &c. Tho' they had some *Mythology* hid under all that.

And as *Men* were their *Gods*, so they made the *first Man* to be *Father* of the *Gods*, and call'd him *Saturn*, not Begot by any *Man*, but the Son of *Cælus* and *Vesta*, that is, of *Heaven* and *Earth*. And his Maiming his *Father* with a Steel *Syth*, was to shew how *Heaven* it self is Impair'd by *Time*, whom they Painted with *Wings* and a *Syth* Mowing down all things. And *Saturn* eating up his own *Children*, was only to Express how *Time* devours all its own *Productions*. And his being Depos'd by *Jupiter*

150 *The Truth of Christianity*

his Son, shews, That *Time* which wears away all other things, is worn away it self at last.

Several of the *Heathen Authors* have given us the *Mythology* of their *Gods*, with which I will not Detain you.

They *Express'd* every thing, and *Worship'd* every thing under the Name of a *God*, as the *God of Sleep*, of *Musick*, of *Eloquence*, of *Hunting*, *Drinking*, *Love*, *War*, &c. They had above *Thirty Thousand* of them. And in what they told of them, and as they *Describ'd* them, they often *Trac'd* the *Sacred Story*.

Ovid begins his *Metamorphoses* with a perfect Poetical Version of the Beginning of *Genesis*. *Ante Mare & Terras* — Then goes on with the History of the *Creation*; the Formation of *Man* out of the Dust of the *Earth*, and his being made after the *Image* of *God*, and to have Dominion over the *Inferior Creatures*. Then he tells of the general Corruption, and the *Giants* before the *Flood*, when the *Earth* was filled with *Violence*; for which all *Mankind* with the *Beasts* and the *Fowl* were *Destroy'd* by the *Universal Deluge*, except only *Deucalion* and *Pyrrah* his Wife, who were *Saved* in a *Boat*, which *Landed* them on the *Top* of

of Mount *Parnassus*. And that from these Two the whole *Earth* was Re-Peopled. I think it will be Needless to Detain the Reader with an Application of this to the History of the *Creation* Set down by *Moses*, of the *Flood*, and the *Ark* wherein *Noah* was Saved, and the *Earth* Re-peopled by Him, &c.

And *Noah* was plainly Intended likewise in their God *Janus*, with his two *Faces*, one *Old*, looking Backward to the *Old World* that was Destroy'd, the other *Young*, looking Forward to the *New World* that was to Spring from him.

So that even their turning the *Sacred History* into *Fable*, is a Confirmation of it. And ther can be no Comparision betwixt the Truth of the *Facts*, so Attested as I have shew'd, and the *Fables* that were made from them.

(3.) Lastly as to the *Mahometan Religion*, it wants all the *Evidences* we have mention'd, for ther was no *Miracle* said to be done by *Mahomet* Publickly and in the *Face* of the *World*, but that only of Conquering with the *Sword*. Who Saw his *Mesra* or Journey from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*, and thence to *Heaven* in one Night, and back in Bed with

152 *The Truth of Christianity*

his Wife in the Morning? Who was Present and heard the Conversation the *Moon* had with him in his *Cave*? It is not said ther was any *Witness*. And the *Alcoran*. c. vi. Excuses his not Working any *Miracles* to Prove his *Mission*. They say that *Moses* and *Christ* came to shew the *Clemency* and *Goodness* of *God*, to which *Miracles* were Necessary. But that *Mahomet* came to shew the *Power* of *God*, to which no *Miracle* was Needful but that of the *Sword*.

(1.) And his *Alcoran* is a *Rapsody* of Stuff without Head or Tail, one wou'd think Wrote by a *Mad-Man*, with Ridiculous *Titles*, as the *Chapter* of the *Cow*, of the *Spider*, &c.

And their *Legends* are much more Senseless than those of the *Papists*, as of an *Angel* the Distance betwixt whose two *Hands* is *Seventy Thousand Days Journey*. Of a *Cow's Head* with *Horns* which have *Forty Thousand Knots*, and *Forty Days Journey* betwixt each *Knot*. And others which have *Seventy Mouths*, and every *Mouth* *Seventy Tongues*, and each *Tongue* praises *God* *Seventy Times a Day*, in *Seventy* different *Idioms*. And of *Wax Candles* before the *Throne* of *God* which are *Fifty Years Journey* from one
End

End to the other. The *Alcoran* says the *Earth* was Created in *Two Days*, and is supported by an *Ox* which stands under it, upon a *White Stone*, with his *Head* to the *East*, and his *Tail* to the *West*, having *Forty Horns*, and as great a Distance betwixt every *Horn* as a Man cou'd Walk in a *Thousand Years Time*.

Then their Description of *Heaven* in a full Enjoyment of *Wine, Women*, and other like *Gross Sensual Pleasures*.

(2.) When you Compare this with our *Holy Scriptures*, you will need no Argument to make you see the Difference. The *Heathen Orators* have Admir'd the *Sublime* of the *Stile* of our *Scriptures*. No *Writing* in the World comes near it, even with all the Disadvantage of our *Translation*, which, being Oblig'd to be *Literal*, must lose much of the of Beauty of it. The *Plainness* and *Succinctness* of the *Historical Part*, the *Melody* of the *Psalms*, the *Instruction* of the *Proverbs*, the *Majesty* of the *Prophets*, and above all, that *Easy Sweetness* in the *New Testament*, where the *Glory of Heaven* is set forth in a *Grave and Moving Expression*, which yet Reaches not the *Height* of the *Subject*; not like the *Flights* of *Rethorick*, which set out *small Matters* in
Great

154 The Truth of Christianity

Great Words. But the Holy Scriptures touch the *Heart*, raise *Expectation*, Confirm our *Hope*, Strengthen our *Faith*, give *Peace* of Conscience, and *Joy* in the Holy Ghost, which is *Inexpressible*. All which you will Experience when you once come to *Believe*, you will then bring forth these *Fruits* of the Spirit, when you Receive the *Word* with *pure Affection*, as we Pray in our *Litany*.

(3.) But, SIR, if ther is Truth in the *Alcoran*, then the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, for the *Alcoran* says so, and that it was Sent to Confirm them, even the Scriptures of both the *Old* and *New Testament*. And it Expressly owns our *Jesus* to be the *Messiah*. At the End of the *fourth Chap.* it has these Words, *The Messiah, Jesus, the Son of Mary, is a Prophet, and an Angel of God, his Word and his Spirit, which he sent to Mary.* But it gives Him not the Name of *Son of God*, for this wise Reason, *Chap. vi. How shall God have a Son who hath no Wives?* Yet it owns *Jesus* to be Born of a pure *Virgin*, without a *Man*, by the Operation of the Spirit of God. And in the same Chapter this *Mahomet* acknowledges his own Ignorance, and says, *I told you not that I had in my Power all the Treasures of God, neither that*

that I had Knowledge of the Future and Past, nor do Affirm that I am an Angel, I only Act what hath been Inspir'd into me, is the Blind like him that Seeth clearly? And after says, I am not your Tutor, every thing hath its time, you shall hereafter Understand the Truth.

This is putting off, and bidding them Expect some other after Mahomet. But our Jesus said He was our Tutor and Teacher, and that ther was none to Come after Him. Mahomet said he was no Angel, but that Jesus was an Angel of God. But when God bringeth Jesus into the World, He saith, Let all the Angels of God Worship Him. Heb. i. 6. And He made Him Lord of all the Angels. Mahomet knew not what was Past or to Come. But our Jesus knew all things, and what was in the Heart of every Man (Joh. ii. 24, 25.) which none can do but God only. i Kin. viii. 39. And foretold things to come to the End of the World. Mahomet had not all the Treasures of God; but in Jesus are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge. For in Him dwelleth all the Fullness of the Godhead bodily. Col. ii. 3. 9.

Again, Mahomet never call'd himself the Messiah, or the Word, or Spirit of God, yet all these Appellations he gives to our Jesus.

Ther

156 *The Truth of Christianity*

There were *Prophecies* of *Jesus* which we have seen. Were there any of *Mahomet*? None, except of the *false Christs* and *false Prophets* which *Jesus* told should come after Him, and bid us beware of them, for that they should *Deceive* many.

(4.) DE. But if *Mahomet* gave thus the Preference to *Christ* in every thing, and said that his *Alcoran* was only a Confirmation of the *Gospel*; how came he to set it up against the *Gospel*, and to Reckon the *Christians* among the *Unbelievers*?

CHR. No otherwise than as other *Hereticks* did, who call'd themselves the only true *Christians*, and Invented New Interpretations of the *Scriptures*. The *Soci-nians* now Charge whole *Christianity* with *Apostacy*, *Idolatry*, and *Polytheism*. And the *Alcoran* is but a *Système* of the Old *Arianism*, ill Digested and Worse put together, with a Mixture of some *Heathenism* and *Judaism*. For *Mahomet's* Father was an *Heathen*, his Mother a *Jewess*, and his Tutor was *Sergius* the Monk a *Nestorian*. Which *Seet* was a Branch of *Arianism*. These Crudely mix'd made up the *Far-rago* of the *Alcoran*. But the prevailing Part was *Arianism*. And where that Spread it self in the *East*, there *Mahometism* Succeeded, and Sprung out of it.

To

To let all *Christians* See the Horrour of that *Herefy*! And our *Socinians* now among Us, who call themselves *Unitarians*, are much more *Mahometans* than *Christians*. For except some *Personal* things as to *Mahomet*, they Agree almost wholly in his Doctrine; And as such Address'd themselves to the *Morocco Ambassador* here in the Reign of King *Char. II.* As you may see in the *Preface* to my *Dialogues* against the *Socinians*, Printed in the Year 1708. Nor do they speak more Honourably of *Christ* and the Holy *Scriptures* than the *Alcoran* does. And ther is no *Errour* concerning *Christ* in the *Alcoran* but what was Broach'd before by the *Hereticks* of *Christianity*, as that *Christ* did not Suffer really, but in Appearance only, or that some other was *Crucify'd* in his Stead, but He taken up into *Heaven*, as the *Alcoran* Speaks.

So that in Strictness I should not have Reckon'd *Mahometism* as one of the *Four Religions* in the *World*, but as one of the *Heresies* of *Christianity*. But because of its Great *Name*, and its having Spread so far in the *World*, by the *Conquests* of *Mahomet* and his Followers, and that it is Vulgarly Understood to be a Distinct *Religion* by it self, therefore I have Consider'd it as such. And

158 *The Truth of Christianity*

And as to your Concern in the Matter, you see plainly, That the *Alcoran* comes in *Attestation* and *Confirmation* of the *Faëts* of *Christ*, and of the Holy *Scriptures*.

DE. I am not come yet so far as to Enter into the Disputes of the several *Sects* of *Christianity*, but as to the *Fact* of *Christ* and of the *Scriptures* in General, *Mahometism* I see does rather *Confirm* than *Opöse* it.

CHR. What then do you think of *Judaism*, as it now *Stands* in *Opposition* to *Christianity*?

DE. Not only as without any *Evidence*, the *Time* *Prophecy'd* of for the *Coming* of the *Messiah* being long since *Past*: But all their former *Evidences* turn *Directly* against them, and against any *Messiah* who ever hereafter should come. As that the *Scepter* should not *Depart* from *Judah*; That he should come into the *Second Temple*; That the *Sacrifices* should *Cease* soon after his *Death*; That *David* should never want a *Son* to *Sit* upon his *Throne*; That they should be many *Days* without a *King*, and without a *Prince*, and without a *Sacrifice*, &c. Which they do not *Suppose* ever will be the *Case* after their *Messiah* is *Come*.
So

So that they are *Witnesses* against *Themselves*.

CHR. And what do you think of the *Stories* of the *Heathen Gods*?

DE. I believe them no more than all the *Stories* in *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. Nor did the wiser *Heathen* believe them, only such *Silly People* as suck in all the *Popish Legends* without Examining.

And to tell you the Truth, I thought the same of all the *Stories* in your *Bible*. But I will take time to Examine those *Proofs* you have given me.

For we *Deists* do not Dispute against *Christianity*, in behalf of any other *Religion*, of the *Jews*, or *Heathens*, or *Mahometans*, all which Pretend to *Revelation*. But we are against all *Revelation*. And go only upon bare *Nature*, and what our own *Reason* dictates to us.

(1.) CHR. What *Nature* dictates, it dictates to All, at least to the *Most* and the *Generality* of *Mankind*. And if we Measure by this, then it will appear a *Natural* Notion, that ther is *Necessity* of *Revelation* in *Religion*. And herein you have all the *World* against you from the very *Beginning*. And will you Plead *Nature* against all these?

DE.

160 The Truth of Christianity

DE. The *Notion* came down from one to another, from the Beginning, we know not how.

CHR. Then it was either *Nature* from the Beginning, or else, it was from *Revelation* at the Beginning. Whence the *Notion* has Descended through all *Posterities* to this *Day*.

(2.) And ther wants not *Reason* for this. For when Man had *Fallen* and his *Reason* was Corrupted (as we *Feel* it upon us to this *Day*, as sensibly as the *Diseases* and *Infirmities* of the *Body*) was it not Highly *Reasonable* that *God* should give us a *Law* and *Directions* how to *Serve* and *Worship* Him? *Sacrifices* do not seem to be any *Natural* Invention. For why should taking away the *Life* of my *Fellow-Creature* be *Acceptable* to *God*, or a *Worship* of Him? It wou'd rather seem an *Offence* against Him. But as *Types* of the Great and only Propitiatory *Sacrifice* of *Christ* to Come, and to keep up our *Faith* in That, the *Institution* given with the *Revelation* of it appears most *Rational*. And that it was *Necessary*, the Great *Defection* shews, not only of the *Heathens*, but of the *Jews* themselves, who tho' they Retain'd the *Institution*, yet in a great Measure Lost the true
Meaning

Meaning and Signification of it. And are now to be brought back to it, by Reminding them of the *Institution* and the *Reason* of it.

Plato in his *Alcibiad. ii. de Precat.* has the same Reasoning, and Concludes, that we cannot know of our selves what *Petitions* will be Pleasing to God, or what *Worship* to give Him: But that it is Necessary a *Law-giver* should be sent from *Heaven* to Instruct us. And such a one he did Expect, and O how Greatly do I desire to see that Man? Says he, and who he is? The Primitive Tradition of the Expected *Messiah* had no doubt come to him, as to many others of the *Heathen*, from the *Jews*, and likely from the Perusal of their *Scriptures*.

For Plato goes further, and says, (*de Leg. l. 4.*) That this *Law-giver* must be more than *Man*; for he Observes that every *Nature* is Govern'd by another *Nature* that is Superior to it, as *Birds* and *Beasts* by *Man*, who is of a *Distinct* and *Superior Nature*. So he Infers, that this *Law-giver* who was to teach *Man* what *Man* cou'd not know by his own *Nature*, must be of a *Nature* that is Superior to *Man*, that is, of a *Divine Nature*.

M

Nay,

162 The Truth of Christianity

Nay, he gives as Lively a Description of the *Person, Qualifications, Life, and Death* of this *Divine Man*, as if he had Copy'd the liii. of *Isaiah*. For he says, (*de Repub.* l. 2.) That this *Just* Person must be *Poor*, and Void of all Recommendations but that of *Vertue* alone. That a *Wicked* World wou'd not Bear his *Instructions* and *Reproof*, and therefore within *Three* or *Four* Years after He began to *Preach*, he should be *Persecuted, Imprison'd, Scourg'd*, and at last put to *Death*, his Word is *Ἀναγιγνέσθαι*, that is, *Cut in Pieces*, as they *Cut* their *Sacrifices*.

D.E. These are Remarkable Passages, as you Apply them. And *Plato* was *Three Hundred* Years before *Christ*.

But I incline to think that these *Notions* came rather from such *Tradition* as you speak of, than from *Nature*. And I can see nothing of *Nature* in *Sacrifices*, they look more like *Institution*, come that how it will.

(3.) CHR. It is Strange that all the *Nations* in the *World* should be Carry'd away from what you call *Nature*. Unless you will take Refuge among the *Hottentotes* at the *Cape of Good Hope*, hardly Distinguishable from *Beasts*, to shew us what *Nature* left to it self wou'd do!

do! And leave us all the *Wise* and *Polite* World on the Side of *Revelation*, either *Real* or *Pretended*: And of Opinion that *Mankind* cou'd not be without it. And my Business now with you has been to Distinguish the *Real* from the *Pretended*.

(4.) DE. By the Account you have given, ther is but one *Religion* in the World, nor ever was. For the *Jewish* was but *Christianity* in *Type*, tho' in time greatly *Corrupted*. And the *Heathen* was a Greater *Corruption*, and Founded the *Fables* of their *Gods* upon the *Facts* of *Scripture*. And the *Mahometan* you say is but a *Heresy* of *Christianity*. So that all is *Christianity* Still.

CHR. It is True God gave but one *Revelation* to the *World*, which was that of *Christ*. And as that was *Corrupted*, New *Revelations* were *Pretended*. But God has Guarded His *Revelations* with such *Evidences*, as it was not in the Power of *Men* or *Devils* to Counterfeit or Contrive any thing like them. Some bear Resemblance in one or two *Features*, in the first Two or Three *Evidences* that I have Produc'd. But as none Reach the *Fourth*, so they are all quite Destitute of the least *Pretence* to the Remaining

164 The Truth of Christianity

Four. So that when you Look upon the *Face of Divine Revelation*, and take it all together, it is Impossible to Mistake it for any of those *Delusions* which the *Devil* has set up in *Imitation* of it. And they are made to *Confirm* it, because all the *Resemblance* they have to *Truth*, is that wherein they are any ways *Like* it, but when Compar'd with it, they Shew as an ill Drawn *Picture*, half *Man* half *Beast*, in Presence of the Beautiful *Original*.

(5.) DE. It is Strange, That if the Case be thus *Plain* as you have made it, the whole World is not Immediately Convinc'd.

CHR. If the *Seed* be never so Good, yet if it be Sown upon *Stones* or among *Thornes*, it will bring forth Nothing. There are *Hearts of Stone*, and others so fill'd with the Love of *Riches*, with the *Cares* and *Pleasures* of this *Life*, that they will not see, they have not a Mind to know any thing which they think wou'd Disturb them in their *Enjoyments*, or Lessen their *Opinion* of them, for that wou'd be taking away so much of their *Pleasure*. Therefore it is no Easy Matter to Persuade Men to Place their *Happiness* in future *Expectations*, which is the Import of the *Gospel*. And in Pressing this,

this, and bidding the *worldly Minded* Abandon their Beloved *Vices*, and telling the *Fatal Consequences* of them, we must Expect to Meet not only with their *Scorn* and *Contempt*, but their utmost *Rage* and *Impatience*, to get Rid of us, as so many *Enemies* of their *Lusts* and *Pleasures*. This is the *Cross* which our *Saviour* Prepar'd all His *Disciples* to Bear, who were to Fight against *Flesh* and *Blood*, and all the *Allurements* of the *World*. And it is a Greater *Miracle* that they have had so many *Followers* in this, than that they have Gain'd to themselves so many *Enemies*. The *World* is a *Strong Man*, and till a *Stronger* than he comes (that is, the full *Persuasion* of the *Future State*) he will keep Possession. And this is the *Victory* that overcometh the *World*, even our *Faith*. But we are told also, that this *Faith* is the *Gift* of *God*. For all the *Evidence* in the *World* will not Reach the *Heart*, unless it be Prepar'd (like the good *Ground*) to Receive the *Doctrine* that is Taught. Till then *Prejudice* will Create *Obstinacy*, which will *Harden* the *Heart* like a *Rock*, and Cry, *Non Persuadebis, etiamsi Persuaseris!* I will not be *Persuaded*, tho' I should be *Persuaded!*

166 The Truth of Christianity

You must Consider under this Head too, the many that have not yet heard of the *Gospel*. And of those that have, the far greater Number who have not the *Capacity* or *Opportunity* to Examine all the *Evidences* of *Christianity*, but take things upon Trust, just as they are Taught. And how many others are *Careless*, and will not be at the Pains, tho' they want not *Capacity* to Inquire into the *Truth*? All these *Classes* will Include the greatest Part of *Mankind*. The *Ignorant*, the *Careless*, the *Vicious* and so the *Obstinate*, the *Ambitious*, and the *Covetous*, whose *Minds* the God of this *World* hath *Blinded*.

But yet in the Midst of all this *Darkness*, God hath not left Himself without *Witness*, which will be Apparent to every Diligent and Sober *Enquirer*, that is *Willing* and *Prepar'd* to Receive the *Truth*.

(6.) Good Sir, let me Ask you, tho' you are of no *Religion*, as you say, but what you call *Natural*; yet wou'd you not think me very *Brutal*, if I should Deny that ever ther was such a Man as *Alexander*, or *Cesar*, or that they did such things? If I should Deny all *History*, or that *Homer*, or *Virgil*, *Demosthenes*,

or

or *Cicero*, ever Wrote such Books? Wou'd you not think me perfectly *Obstinate*, Seiz'd with a Spirit of *Contradiction*, and not fit for *Human Conversation*?

And yet these thinks are of no *Consequence* to me, it is not a *Farthing* as to my *Interest*, whether they are *True* or *False*.

Will you then think your self a *Reasonable Man*, if in Matters of the greatest *Importance*, even your *Eternal State*, you will not Believe those *Facts* which have a Thousand times more *Certain* and *Indisputable Evidence*? Were ther any *Prophecies* of *Cesar* or *Pompey*? Were ther any *Types* of them, or *Publick Institutions* Appointed by a *Law*, to *Prefigure* the Great things that they should do? Any *Persons* who went before them, to bear a *Resemblance* of these things, and bid us Expect that Great Event? Was ther a *General Expectation* in the *World* of their *Coming*, before or at the *Time* when they *Came*? And of what *Consequence* was their *Coming*, to the *World*, or to after *Ages*? No more than a *Robbery* Committed a Thousand Years ago!

Were the *Greek* and *Roman Histories* Wrote by the *Persons* who did the *Facts*,

168 The Truth of Christianity

or by *Eye Witnesses*? And for the greater *Certainty* were those *Histories* made the *Standing Law* of the *Country*? Or were they any more than our *Holinshead* and *Stow*, &c?

Must we believe these, on Pain of not being thought *Reasonable Men*? And are we then *Un-Reasonable* and *Credulous*, if we Believe the *Facts* of the Holy *Bible*? which was the *standing Law* of the *People* to whom it was *Given*, and *Wrote* or *Dictated* by those who did the *Facts*, with *Publick Institutions* Appointed by them as a *Perpetual Law* to all their *Generations*; And which, if the *Facts* had been *False*, cou'd never have Pass'd at the Time when the *Facts* were said to be done; Nor for the same Reason, if that *Book* had been *Wrote* afterwards; because these *Institutions* (as *Circumcision*, the *Passover*, *Baptism*, &c.) were as *Notorious Facts* as any, and that *Book* saying they *Commenc'd* from the Time that the *Facts* were done, must be found to be *False*, whenever it was *Trumpt* up in after *Ages*, by no such *Institutions* being then known. Not like the *Feasts*, *Games*, &c. in Memory of the *Heathen Gods*, which were Appointed long after those *Facts* were said to be done; And the like

like *Institutions* may be Appointed to Morrow in Memory of any *Falshood*, said to be done a *Thousand* Years ago; And so is no *Proof* at all. And tho' a *Legend* or *Book* of *Stories* of things said to be done many Years past may be *Paum'd* upon People, yet a *Book* of *Statutes* cannot, by which their *Causes* are Try'd every Day.

Are ther such *Prophecies* extant in any *Prophane History* so long before the *Facts* there Recorded, as ther are in the Holy *Scriptures* of the Coming of the *Messiah*?

Were ther any *Types* or *Fore-runners* of the *Heathen Gods*, or of *Mahomet*?

Is ther the like *Evidence* of the *Truth* and *Sincerity* of the *Greek* and *Roman Historians*, as of the *Pen-Men* of the Holy *Scriptures*?

Wou'd these *Historians* have given their *Lives* for the *Truth* of all they Wrote?

Did they tell such *Facts* only, wherein it was Impossible for themselves to be *Impos'd* upon, or that they should *Impose* upon others? Nothing but what themselves had *Seen* and *Heard*, and they also to whom they Spoke?

Did they Expect Nothing but *Persecution* and *Death* for what they Related? And were they bidden to Bear it *Patiently* without

170 The Truth of Christianity

without *Resistance*? Was this the Case of the *Disciples* of *Mahomet*, who were Requir'd to *Fight* and *Conquer* with the *Sword*?

Did any *Religion* ever overcome by *Suffering*, but the *Christian* only?

And did any Exhibit the *Future State*, and Preach the *Contempt* of *this World* like the *Christian*?

DE. That's the Reason it has Prevail'd so little. And yet, Considering this, it is Strange it has Prevail'd so much.

(7.) But ther is one thing yet behind, wherein I wou'd be glad to have your Opinion, because I find your *Divines* differ about it. And that is, how we shall know to Distinguish betwixt True and False *Miracles*.

And this is Necessary to the Subject we are upon. For the force of the *Facts* you Alledge ends all in this, That such *Miraculous* Facts are a Sufficient *Attestation* of such *Persons* being Sent of God; and Consequently, that we are to Believe the *Doctrine* which they Taught.

You know we *Deists* deny any such thing as *Miracles*, but Reduce all to *Nature*. Yet I confess if I had seen such *Miracles* as are Recorded of *Moses* and
of

of *Christ*, it wou'd have Convinc'd me. And for the Truth of them we must Refer to the *Evidences* you have given. But in the mean time, if ther is no *Rule* whereby to Distinguish betwixt True and False *Miracles*, there is an End of all the Pains you have taken. For if the *Devil* can Work such things as Appear *Miracles* to me, I am as much Persuaded as if they were true *Miracles*, and Wrought by *God*. And so Men may be Deceiv'd in Trusting to *Miracles*.

The Common Notion of a *Miracle* is what Exceeds the Power of *Nature*. To which we say, That we know not the utmost of the *Power* of *Nature*, and Consequently cannot tell what *Exceeds* it. Nor do you pretend to know the utmost of the *Power* of *Spirits*, whether *Good* or *Evil*, and how then can you tell what *Exceeds* their *Power*?

I doubt not but you wou'd have thought those to be true *Miracles* which the *Magicians* are said to have Wrought in *Aegypt*, but that *Moses* is said to have Wrought *Miracles* that were *Superior* to them.

CHR. Therefore if two *Powers* Contend for the *Superiority*, as here *God* and the *Devil* did, the best Issue can be is
to

172 The Truth of Christianity

to see them *Wrestle* together, and then we shall soon know which is *Strongest*. This was the Case of *Moses* and the *Magicians*, of *Christ* and the *Devil*. There was a *Struggle*, and *Satan* was plainly *Overcome*.

I confess I know not the *Power* of *Spirits*, nor how they *Work* upon *Bodies*. And by the same Reason that a *Spirit* can lift a *Straw*, he may a *Mountain*, and the whole *Earth*, for ought I know. And may do many things which wou'd Appear true *Miracles* to me. And so might *Deceive* me. And all I have to Trust to, in this Case, is, the *Restraining Power* of *God*, that He will not *Permit* the *Devil* so to do. And were it not for this, I doubt not but the *Devil* cou'd take away my *Life* in an Instant, or *Inflict* terrible *Diseases* upon me, as upon *Job*.

And I think this Consideration is the strongest Motive in the World to keep us in a Constant *Dependence* upon *God*, that we live in the midst of such powerful *Enemies*, as we can by no Means *Resist* of our selves, and are in their *Power* every Minute, when *God* shall withdraw His *Protection* from us.

And it is in their *Power* likewise to *Work Signs* and *Wonders* to *Deceive* us, if *God* permit. And herein the Great *Power*

mer and Goodness of God is Manifest, That He has never yet Permitted the Devil to Work Miracles in Opposition to any whom He sent, except where the Remedy was at Hand, and to shew His Power the more, as in the Case of Moses and the Magicians, &c.

And this is further Evident, because God has, at other times, and upon other Occasions, Suffer'd the Devil to Exert his Power, as to make Fire Descend upon Job's Cattle, &c. But here was no Cause of Religion concern'd, nor any Truth of God in Debate.

DE. But your Christ has foretold, Matth. xxiv. 24. That false Christs and false Prophets shall Arise, who shall shew great Signs and Wonders, to Deceive, if possible, the very Elect. And it is said, ii Thess. ii. 9. That ther shall be a wicked One, whose Coming is after the Working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders. And it is Suppos'd Deut. xiii. 1. &c. That a false Prophet may give a Sign or a Wonder, to draw Men after false Gods. Here then is Sign against Sign, and Wonder against Wonder, and which of these shall we Believe?

CHR. The First no doubt. For God Cannot Contradict Himself, nor will shew Signs

174 The Truth of Christianity

Signs and Wonders, in Opposition to that *Law* which He has Exstablish'd by so many *Signs and Wonders*. Therefore in such a Case we must Conclude, that God has Permitted the *Devil* to Exert his *Power*, as against *Moses* and *Christ*, for the Tryal of our *Faith*, and to shew the Superior *Power* of God more Eminently, in *Overcoming* all the *Power* of the *Enemy*.

But, as I said before, we have a more sure *Word*, that is, *Proof*, than even these *Miracles* exhibited to our outward *Senses*, which is the *Word* of *Prophecy*. Let then any *false Christ* who shall pretend to Come hereafter, shew such a *Book* as our *Bible*, which has been so long in the World (the most Ancient Book now Extant) *Testifying* of Him, Foretelling the *Time* and all other *Circumstances* of his *Coming*, with his *Sufferings* and *Death*, and all these *Prophecies* exactly Fulfill'd in him. And till he can do this, he cannot have that *Evidence* which our *Christ* has, and he must be a *false Christ* to me, and all the *Signs* that he can shew, will be but *lying Wonders* to any that is truly Establish'd in the *Christian Faith*.

But it may be a Tryal too Strong for those *Careless* ones, who will not be at the *Pains* to Enquire into the Grounds of

of their *Religion*, but take it upon Trust, as they do the *Fashions*, and minde not to Frame their *Lives* according to it, but are Immersed in the *World*, and the *Pleasures* of it.

(8.) And it will be a Just Judgment upon these, that they who Shut their Eyes against all the Clear Evidences of the Gospel, should be given up to Believe a Lye. And the Reason is given ii *Thess.* ii. 12. Because they had Pleasure in Un-Righteousness. They Loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were Evil.

So that I must Repeat what I said before, That ther is a Preparation of the Heart (as of the Ground) to Receive the Truth. And where the Doctrine does not Please, no Evidence, how Clear soever, will be Receiv'd. God cannot Enter till Mammon be Dispossest'd. We cannot serve these two Masters. He who has a Clear Sight of Heaven, cannot Value the dull Pleasures of this Life. And it is Impossible that he who is Drown'd in Sense can Relish Spiritual things. The Love of this World is Enmity against God. The first Sin was a Temptation of Sense. And the Reparation is to open our Eyes to the Enjoyment of God. Vice Clouds this Eye,
and

176 The Truth of Christianity

and makes it *Blind* to the only True and Eternal Pleasure. It is *Foolishness* to such a one.

This, This, SIR, is the *Remora* that keeps Men from *Christianity*. It is not Want of *Evidence*, but it is want of *Consideration*. I wou'd not say this to you, till I had first gone through all the Topicks of *Reason* with you, that you might not Call it *Cant*. But this is the *Truth*. As *David* says, *To him that Ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God*. And our *Saviour* says, *If any Man do the Will of God, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self*. And *No man can Come unto Me except the Father draw him*.

This was the Reason why *St. John* the *Baptist* was sent as a *Forerunner* to Prepare the Way for *Christ*, by Preaching of *Repentance*, to Fit Men for Receiving the *Gospel*.

And they who Repented of their Sins upon his Preaching, did gladly Embrace the *Doctrine* of *Christ*. But they who wou'd not Forsake their Sins, Remain'd *Obdurat*, tho' otherwise Men of Sense and Learning. As our *Saviour* told the *Priests* and *Elders*, *Matth. xxi. 32. John came unto you in the way of Righteousness,*

Righteousness, and ye Believ'd him not; but the Publicans and the Harlots Believed him. And ye when ye had seen it, Repented not afterwards, that ye might Believe him.

And when Christ sought to Prepare them for His Doctrine, by telling them, That they cou'd not serve God and Mammon, it is said, Luk. xvi. 14. That when the Pharisees who were Covetous, heard these things, they Derided him. But He Instructed them in the next Verse (if they wou'd have Received it) That what is Highly Esteemed amongst Men, is Abomination in the Sight of God. And Enforced this with the Example of the Rich-Man and Lazarus. And said chap. xviii. 25. That it was Easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a Rich Man to Enter into the Kingdom of God. And chap. xiv. 33. That whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple. Now take this in the Largest Sense, That he who is not Ready and Willing to Forsake all, as if he Hated them, as Christ said ver. 26. If any Man come to Me, and Hate not his Father and Mother, &c. (that is, when they come in Competition with any Command of Christ) and

Therefore N take

178 The Truth of Christianity

take not up his Cross and follow Me, he cannot be my Disciple. How few Disciples wou'd He have had in this Age! Wou'd all His Miracles Persuade some to this! The World is too Hard for Heaven with most Men!

Here is the Cause of Infidelity. The Love of the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, Darken the Heart, and like Shutters keep out the Light of Heaven; till they are Remov'd, the Light cannot Enter. The Spirit of Purity and Holiness will not Descend into an Heart full of all Uncleanness. If we wou'd Invite this Guest, we must Sweep the House and make it Clean.

But this too is of God. For He only can make a Clean Heart, and Renew a Right Spirit within us. But He has Promis'd to give this Wisdom to those who Ask it, and lead a Godly Life. Therefore Ask and you shall Have, Seek and you shall Find, Knock and it shall be Open'd unto you. But do it Ardently and Incessantly, as he that Striveth for his Soul. For God is Gracious and Merciful, Long-Suffering and of Great Goodness; and those who come to Him in Sincerity He will in no ways Cast out. Therefore

Therefore *Pray* in *Faith* nothing *Doubting*.
And what you *Pray* for (according to
His Will) *Believe* that you *Receive* it,
and you shall *Receive* it.

To His *Grace* I commend you.

(9.) And, with the *Fulness* of the
Gentiles, O that it wou'd please *God* to
take the *Veil* off the *Heart* of the *Jews*,
and let them see, That as they have
been *Deceived* by many false *Messiahs*
since *Christ* came; so None whom they
Expect hereafter can *Answer* the *Pro-*
phesies of the *Messiah* (some of which I
have Nam'd) and therefore no such can
be the *Messiah* who is *Prophecy'd* of in their
own *Scriptures*.

And let them see and *Consider* how
that *Fatal Curse* they *Imprecated* upon
themselves, *His Blood be on us and on our*
Children, has *Cleav'd* unto them, be-
yond all their former *Sins*, and even
Repeated Idolatry, from which (to shew
that this is not the *Cause* of their present
Dispersion) they have kept themselves
free ever since; and for which their longest
Captivity was but *Seventy Years*, and then
Prophets were sent to them, to *Comfort*
them, and *Assure* them of a *Restoration*:
but now they have been about *Seventeen*

180 The Truth of Christianity, &c.

Hundred Years, Dispersed over all the Earth, without any Prophet or Prospect of their Deliverance; That the whole World might take Notice, of this before Unparallel'd Judgment, not known to any Nation that ever yet was upon the Face of the Earth! So Punished, and so Preserved for Judgment, and I Hope, at Last, for a more Wonderful Mercy! For if the Casting away of them be the Reconciling of the World, what shall the Receiving of them be, but Life from the Dead? For God hath concluded all in Unbelief, that He might have Mercy upon all. O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How Unsearchable are His Judgments, and His Ways past finding out! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To whom be Glory for Ever. Amen.

Private

OF
Private JUDGMENT
 AND
AUTHORITY,
 IN
MATTERS of FAITH.

(I.) **A**LL the *Religions* and all the *Sects* in the World are Built upon the Dispute betwixt these Two, whether Men are to Govern themselves by their own *Private Judgment*, or to be Determined by the *Authority* of Others, in their *Faith* or *Religion*.

(II.) The Effects of *private Judgment* are these, Multiplicity of *Sects* and *Opinions*: Perpetual *Wrangling*, without any

Umpire or Judge of Controversy; whence come Inveterate Prejudices against each other, *Animosities, Strifes, Envyings*, and all the *War of Religion*; which the most of any one thing Embroils the Peace of the *World*, and is always the chief Pre-*tence* in the *Civil Wars of Nations* within themselves, and most commonly in the *Wars of Kingdoms* against Kingdoms. To Remedy all which Evils, some think ther is no other Method, but to have some settled Judge of Controversy, to whom Appeals may be made, and whose Determination should End all Disputes concerning Religion: And this not only as to the outward Peace of the Church, and consequently of the *World*; but even as to Mens inward Persuasion and Belief, especially in Matters of Faith; for how otherwise, say they, shall every private Person Determine himself as to the Articles of Faith? The greatest Part of Mankind are Ignorant, and must Depend upon the Judgment of others; and what wild Work would it make, to leave every Man, Woman, and Child, to Pick out their own Faith, either from the Strength of their own Reason, or from the Scriptures (suppose) amongst us? We should have as many Religions al-
most

most as Men, and as many Different Faiths? And suppose the Scriptures to be an Infallible and Compleat RULE of Faith, yet how shall we Agree about the true Meaning and Interpretation of them? We see every Sect quote Scripture, and every one has his own Interpretation of it. This is Endless, and utter Confusion. These are the Inconveniencies which Attend leaving every Man to follow his own private Judgment.

(III.) But then on the other hand there are likewise Difficulties in our Submitting our private Judgment to Authority. First, because it is left to our private Judgment to Chuse that Authority to which we ought to Submit. How otherwise shall a Man Determine himself, whether he should be a Christian, a Jew, a Mahometan, or an Heathen? For there is no Judge over all these. And this is the First, and the most Material Step he can and must make in the Choice of his Religion. And if there is nothing to Guide him herein (under God) but his own private Judgment, Why should not that (say others) be likewise Sufficient to Guide him in the Disputes there are among the Sub-

184 Of Private Judgment

Divisions of Each of these Religions? For if I must Trust to my own *private Judgment* in the most *Material Point*, why not in the *Lesser*? Nay, the *Belief* of a God, which is the *First* and *Highest Point* in all Religions, depends upon *private Judgment*, and not upon *Authority*. It would be *Blasphemy* to put it upon any *Human Authority*, for that would set such *Authority* above God! If I believe *James* upon the *Word* of *John*, I must have a greater *Confidence* in *John* than in *James*, in the *Recommender* than in the *Person* who is *Recommended* by Him. So it is if I should Believe a God upon the *Authority* of any *Church*, it would *Certainly* follow, That my *Faith*, was more in that *Church*, than in God! And I have no more for the *Authority* of that *Church*, than the *Judgment* I pass upon the *Arguments* offered to *Convince* me of it. So that all Rests upon my own *private Judgment* still. And it is *Impossible* I can be more *Sure* of any thing, than of the *Certainty* of my own *Judgment*. I cannot be *Surer* of the *Being* of a God, than of the *Truth* of those *Reasons* which *Persuade* me to *Believe* it. And all the *Reasons* before given for *Submitting* my *private Judgment* to

Authority,

Authority, Suppose the *Truth* of my *Judgment*, and *Appeal* to it; why else does any *Persuade* another? And *private Judgment* can never be so fatally *Mistaken*, as in Submitting to *Authority*, if it should *Judge* Wrong; because in all other *Errors* it may be set Right again, by stronger *Reasons* being offered on the other Side; but if a Man once *Resign* his *Reason*, and give it up Absolutely to *Authority*, ther are no Means left to Retrieve him, if he has *Judged* amiss in the *Choice* of such a *Guide*, whom he thinks to be *Infallible*; he must then follow his *Guide*, though in all the *Wild Delusions* that are possible; for he must *Examine* no more; his *Principle* is, to go on *Blind-fold*: he has Plucked out his *Eyes*, that he may *See* the Better!

And the Question will now Remain, whether greater *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniencies* have befallen *Mankind* in the one way or in the other, in following their *private Judgment*, or in submitting *Implicitly* to *Authority*? And we may Argue this Case, for let any Man *Talk* what he will, and *Think* never so much that he has Abandoned his *private Judgment*, yet it is not in his Power, while he Remains a *Man*; it is Inseparable from

186 Of Private Judgment

from *Human Nature*, and cannot be utterly *Extinguished*; though some have so *Defaced* it, that it is hardly *Visible*.

But if in this Enquiry it should be found that greater *Mischiefs* have Attended *private Judgment*, than *Authority*, yet would that be no greater Argument against *private Judgment*, than it would be against *Free-Will*, or any other Composition of our *Nature*, if the *Mischiefs* it Occasions were more than the *Good*. We cannot Alter our *Nature*, it must be as it is. Perhaps Men make use of their *Hands* to more *Destruction* in *Wars*, *Murders*, *Robberies*, *Thefts*, &c. than any *Good* they do with them; yet this would be an ill Argument for Cutting off the *Hands* of our *Children* as soon as they were Born. And it would be Worse to Divest Men of their *Understanding*, because their *private Judgment* might *Mislead* them.

1. But however let us go on to the Comparison. The *Christians* will easily Allow all the *Heathen* as *Misled* by *Authority*, for they go on in the Track of their *Fathers*, without *Examination* of the *Grounds* or *Reasons* of their *Religion*. But they have no Notion of an *Infallible Judge*,

Judge, and therefore were more easily
Converted, and now make the great
Body of Christians.

2. But the Jews stood out at first and
still Continue in their Infidelity, upon
the single Point of Authority, because
Christ was Rejected by their Church. And
it is the same Point of the Authority of
the Church which Rivets the Church of
Rome in all her Errors, and makes any
Reformation Impossible. And indeed I
see not how a Jew can be Converted up-
on this Principle, which is common to
Them and the Church of Rome. But this
will Appear more Plainly by hearing
Each of them Defend himself. And in
this Conversation which I now Introduce,
I will bring in a Church of England Man,
to shew what that true Authority is which
God has Delegated to His Church, for no
doubt She has an Authority, and a Great
one; and then a Dissenter shall Argue for
private Judgment against that Authority,
and this will put the Matter in as Clear
a Light as any way. I can Contrive
To begin then thus. (IV.) Jew. Do not you of the Church
of Rome lay down this as a Foundation-
Principle, That it is Inconsistent with
the

188 Of Private Judgment

the Goodness of God to leave Men without a sufficient Guide in Matters of Faith; and not to Preserve that Guide from Misleading us, to the Ruin of our Souls?

ROM. CATHOLICK. Yes, this is our Principle, as I suppose it is yours.

JEW. It is ours too. And that this Guide is the Church. And therefore we Reject your Messiah, because the Church did Reject him. And ours was Indisputably the only Church of God then in the World, whereas other Christian Churches Dispute this Point with the Church of Rome.

R. C. There was but one Christian Church from the Beginning of the World, under divers Dispensations. Yours was one of these; Which Ended when the Messiah came, the Church was then in Him, and Removed from the Synagogue.

JEW. Did God then forsake His Church and Chuse Another? But you say, That Christ is not the Church, but came to Redeem the Church, He did not come to Redeem Himself. You call the Church His Body. Then he had no such Body when He came at first, unless it were our Church? And he owned Ours to be the Church all his Life time. And Com-manded his Disciples to be Obedient to

Her

Her, as *Sitting in Moses Seat*. Matth. xxiii. 2, 3.
 And she was owned as such by his *Apostles*. But Act. iv. 8. xxiii. 5.
 how did he Prove himself to be the *Messiah*?

R. C. He proved it Evidently by His *Miracles*, by His Heavenly *Doctrine*, and by the *Prophecies* of Him in your own *Scriptures*.

JEW. But the Church Determined against Him in all these, and said, That he wrought his *Miracles* by *Beelzebub*: That he was a *Deceiver* in his *Doctrine*: And that He was not the *Messiah* of whom the *Scriptures* Spoke. Now, SIR, pray tell me, who is the proper *Interpreter* of *Scripture*? Is it the Church, or is it left to every Man's *private Judgment*? And take this along with you, That no Jew turned *Christian*, but he who Preferred his own *private Judgment* to the *Authority* of the Church: But all who Adhered to the Church as their *Infallible Guide*, and left the *Interpretation* of *Scripture* to Her, did Reject your *Christ*, as we all do to this Day.

And we Build upon the *Promises* of God made to His Church, to our Church; That the *Lips* of the *Priests* should preserve *Knowledge*, and that we should seek the

190 Of Private Judgment

Mal. ii. 7. *the Law at his Mouth, for that he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

And as for me, this is my Covenant with them, saith the Lord, my

Isai. lix. 21. *Spirit that is upon Thee, and my Words which I have put in thy Mouth, shall not Depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seeds Seed, saith the Lord, from Henceforth and for Ever.*

And this Method of Hearkning to the Church, is Called the way of Holiness, and a High-Way for

Isai. xxxv. 8. *Plainness, that the way-faring Men, though Fools, shall not Err therein. And we have many other Texts to the same Purpose.*

ROM. CATHO. These were meant of the Christian Church which was to Come.

JEW. But they were made to our Church. And if they did not Belong to our Church, then we have been Misled all this while, and we have had no Guide of Controversy, and so the Goodness of God has Failed, which You as well as We own is Obligated not to leave Men without such a Guide.

ROM. CATHO. If you had Hearkned to your own Prophets, they would Infallibly

fallibly have led you to our *Christ*, for they spoke of Him.

J E W. This is still the *Question*, whether your *Christ* was the *Messiah*, or not? And let me Ask you, are we not obliged to take the *Judgment* of the *Present Church* in every *Age*? Or may any Man in his *private Judgment* depart from the *Decision* of the *Church* under which he lives, and *Appeal* to the *Church* in *Primitive* times? Has not the *Church* in one *Age* as much *Authority* as in former *Ages*? Is not her *Commision* *Perpetual*? Therefore the *Church* in *Being* at that *Time* when your *Christ* came, was the only *Judge* then to which all ought to have *Re-course*, and by whose *Judgment* they ought to *Abide*; and She was then the only *Authentick Interpreter* of *Scriptures*. The *Promises* of *Perpetuity*, *Infallibility*, &c. Were made to us *Jews*, you *Gentiles* were not then *Concerned*. And will you not give us leave to *Understand* our own *Law* best, wherein we were *Born* and *Bred*, and which we *Received* from our *Fathers*, who were perpetually *Conversant* in it, and made it their *Study* *Day* and *Night*? Yet you now would *Exclude* us, and tell us you *Understand* our *Law* better than our
selves;

192 Of Private Judgment

selves; and that it meant *You* all that
 while, and you Quote it on your Side.
 But if it did ultimately Refer to *You*,
 yet surely that was not so Literally and
 Primarily as to *Us* who were Named,
 and were First in Possession of it; if it
 did Descend from *Us* to *You*, yet *We*
 must not be overlooked; and if these
 Promises were not made good to *Us*,
You can have no Title to them, who on-
 ly Inherit them after *Us*; can the Child
 Inherit more than what his Father left
 him? And if the Elder Brother was Dis-
 possessed, to make Room for the Younger,
 as you love to Speak, yet the Younger does
 but Succeed to what the Elder had be-
 fore. Therefore these Promises which
 were made to *Us* the Elder Brother, can-
 not Belong to *You* the Younger, unless
 they did First Belong to *Us*. Otherwise
 they did Belong to none at all when
 they were made, nor for many Ages af-
 ter.

(V.) CHURCH of ENGLAND-MAN. You
 are both upon one Bottom, the Authority
 of the Church; and Both cannot be Right.
 But the Jew has the Advantage in this,
 That you Both allow his Church to have
 been the only true Church in the World,

; 25161

for

for many Ages together ; whereas the *Jew* does not Allow the *Church* of *Rome* ever to have been any true *Church*, or that *Salvation* is to be had in Her.

R. C. This is to Retort the Argument we use against you of the *Church* of *England*, That you own *Ours* to have been a True and Orthodox *Church*; and then we ask, when did She *Fail*? But we say, the *Church* can never *Fail*; and that *Salvation* is only to be had with Us.

C. E. I did indeed bring it in for this Purpose, to shew you the *Fallacie* of that Popular Argument by which you gain *Profelyts* among the *Vulgar* Sort, viz. The *Church* of *England* allows *Salvation* may be had in the *Church* of *Rome*; but the *Church* of *Rome* denies *Salvation* may be had in the *Church* of *England*; Therefore it is safer by Confession on both Sides, to be of the *Church* of *Rome* than of the *Church* of *England*. This I have heard often Urged, and it seems to carry a great Deal in it, at first Sight, with the unthinking People. But when they see that all the Force in it Strikes equally against *Christianity* in Favour of *Judaism*, I hope it will make them Consider and Examine into

O

the

184 Of Private Judgment

the Bottom of this Pretence. Which is Grounded upon the same Error that Misled the Jews, viz. The *Absolute* and *Indefeasible* AUTHORITY of the Church, in Opposition to *private Judgment*.

DISSENTER. I have now a fair Field opened to me against you of the Church of England, for we set up our own *private Judgment* against the *Authority* of your Church.

C. E. You shall be Heard in your Place. But the R. C. has not yet done with what I know he has to Alledge.

(VI.) R. C. No, I have not. For since my Argument is now with you, I have more to Urge than I could against the Jew, which is, the *Proofs* out of the *New-Testament* for the *Infallibility* and *Perpetuity* of our Church, such as, *Upon this Rock I will Build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not*
Matth. xvi. 18. xviii. 17. *Prevail against it — Tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to Hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen-Man and a Publican.*
Joh. xvi. 13. *And when the Spirit of Truth is come, He will Guide you unto all Truth.* And ther are other Texts which you know we Urge to this Purpose.

C. E.

C. E. But not one of them that Names the *Church of Rome*. And here you know is our Dispute. You call your selves the *Catholick Church*, and Confine whole *Christianity* within the *Communion* of the *Pope of Rome*, as the *Principle of Unity* and *Head of All*. And yet ther is not one Word in the *Scripture* of either the *Pope* or *Church of Rome*. So that this must be Determined purely by *private Judgment*. And this is your whole *Foundation*, as you stand Distinguished from *Us* and other *Christian Churches*. And if *private Judgment* is to be Determined by *Vote*, ther are *Ten to One* against the *Church of Rome* upon this Point. And that not only of those who have Broke off from her since the *Reformation*; but the *Greek Church*, and other *Numerous Churches* in *Asia*, and *Africa*, did never own the *Supremacy* of *Rome*, nor do to this Day. And these; without the *Reformation*, will far out Number not only what can be Properly call'd the *Church of Rome* now at this Time, but in the largest *Extent* that ever she was, even before the *Reformation*.

(VII.) R. C. But the *Church of Rome* is the *Mother-Church*.

196 Of Private Judgment

C. E. How can She be the *Mother* of those *Churches* which never Descended from her? Ther were *Churches* of the *Gentiles* before ther was any at *Rome*.

Aët. xi. 26. The *Disciples* were called *Christians* first in *Antioch*. But it is Certain that the *Jewish-Christian Church* was the *Mother* of all other *Christian Churches*. And so *Christ* did Ordain, That the *Gospel* should be *Luk. xxiv. 47.* Preached among all *Nations*, beginning at *Jerusalem*. And the *Apostles* went about, Preaching the *Word* to none but unto the *Jews* only. And

Aët. xi. 19. thus it Continued till the *Vision* of the *Sheet* to *St. Peter*. *Aët. x.* for they did not know before, that the *Gentiles* were to be made *Partakers* of the *Gospel*. Therefore all the *Promises* of *Christ* which you have Named were made to this *First* and *Mother-Christian Church* of the *Jews*, and she was in Possession of them before ther was one *Christian* in *Rome*, or any where among the *Gentils*.

R. C. But *Rome* is become the *Mother-Church* since.

C. E. Not to Half, as I have shewed above. But if the *Mother-Church*, and the *Promises* made to it can be Transferred from one *Church* to another, then

it

it may be Transferred from *Rome*, as it was from *Jerusalem*, and so without End. And to what *Particular Church* will you then Fix these *Promises* of *Perpetuity, &c.*? You must come to us, who Believe that *Christ* will always have a *Church* upon Earth; and that the *Gates* of *Hell* shall not finally Prevail against His *Church* in General; but that ther is no *Promise* to secure any *Particular Church* that her *Candlestick* may not be Removed, as others have been.

R. C. But what *Church* was that of which *Christ* spoke when He said, Tell it unto the *Church, &c.*

C. E. It was every *Particular Church*. For the Case there put is of private *Difference* betwixt Man and Man, If thy *Brother Trespass* against thee— There *Christ* directs first private *Admonition*, then the Intervention of *Friends*, but if that would not do, then Tell it to the *Church*, that is, to the *Church* or *Congregation* of which you are both *Members*. It is Impossible to bring every private *Quarrel* before the *Catholick Church*. Ther was nothing at all of the *Faith* concerned in this Case. Nor in the xvii. of *Deut.* (often Quoted by you for the *Infallible Judgment* of the *Church*) the

188 Of Private Judgment

Case there put is only about *Civil* Causes, as you may see *ver.* 8. And the *Civil Judge* is Joined with the *Priests* in this. But neither *God* nor *Christ* does any where send us to a *Judge of Faith*. Ther cannot be any *Judge of Faith* but *God* alone.

(VIII.) R. C. Why do you say ther *Cannot*? No doubt ther *Maybe* such a *Judge*, whether ther is or not.

C. E. The best Way is to put it to a *Tryal*. Let us begin then with the *Creed*, the first *Article* is, *I believe in God the Father Almighty*. Now I ask, who is *Judge* of this *Article*? Who is *Judge* whether ther is a *God* or not? And so of the Rest. Whether ther is a *Christ*? Whether He *Died*, *Rose*, &c.? Whether ther is a *Holy Ghost*? Whether ther will be a *Resurrection* of the *Dead*, and a *Life Eternal*?

R. C. This is an odd way of turning the *Question*. Ther is no such *Judge* of these things, as that we were not to Believe ther is a *God*, or *Christ*, &c. if such *Judge* should so *Determine*.

C. E. Then ther is no *Judge of Faith*. And now I will give you the *Reason* why ther *Cannot* be such a *Judge* among

mong Men. Because where any thing is determined by *Authority*, such *Authority* must be *Superior* to what it *Determines*. As in *Civil* Causes, the *Authority* of the *King* by whole *Commission* they are *Determined*, is *Superior* to the *Right* or *Property* of the *Subject*. And for the same Reason, if I should Believe a *God*, or a *Christ*, &c. upon any *Authority* whatsoever, that *Authority* with me must be *Prior* and *Superior* to what I believe upon that *Authority*. And thus the *Church* (Supposing it such a *Judge* of *Faith*) would have an *Authority* above *God*, or *Christ*, or any thing Contained in the *Creed*. And therefore I think it is Plain, that we Receive not the *Creed* upon the *Authority* of the *Church*.

(IX.) R. C. You had never had the *Creed* but by the *Church*,

C. E. That may be. The *Church* Taught it me, *Propos'd* it to me, and *Convinced* me of the *Truth* of it. But not by Way of *Authority*, for I could not believe the *Authority* of the *Church*, till I was first *Convinced* by the *Scriptures* that *Christ* had *Established* such a *Church*, and *Vested* Her with such *Authority*. So that I Receive the *Scriptures*

200 Of Private Judgment

tures upon the *Testimony* not *Authority* of the *Church*; and I Examine that *Testimony*, as I do other *Facts*, till I have Satisfy'd my *private Judgment*, ther is no other way. As suppose an *Athiest* to be Convinced by me of the Being of a *God*, he then *Believes* it, and I may be said to be an *Instrument* in this. But how *Foolish* would it be in Me, nay *Blasphemous*, to Assume *Authority* over him for this, and say, That it was by my *Authority* he Believed a *God*, and therefore that he was obliged to *Believe* every thing else I told him, without *Examining*; because if my *Authority* was taken for the Being of *God*, then nothing surely of lesser Consequence could be Excepted from it. This is the Manner of Argumentation for Receiving the *Faith* from the *Authority* of the *Church*. This is that *Circle* from which you can never Rid your selves, of Believing the *Scriptures* upon the *Authority* of the *Church*; and then back again, of Believing the *Church* upon the *Authority* of the *Scriptures*. This makes *Each* of them of greater *Authority* than the *Other*, and *Each* of them of *Lesser*!

And now tell me, if I have Nothing but my *private Judgment* for the Being of
of

of a God, shall the *Church* pretend to an *Authority* over *private Judgment*; and that I shall not be Allowed to make Use of it in any thing She Proposes to me!

(X.) R. C. In smaller things you may, which we call Matters of *Opinion*, but not in Matters of *Faith*, for then, *who shall be Judge?*

C. E. I think the *Reverse* of this to be the *Truth*, viz. That this Question, *who shall be Judge?* And the Submitting of our *private Judgment*, is only in *Smaller* Matters, and of little *Consequence*. As in *Temporal* Affairs, and Disputes of *Meum* and *Tuum*; and in Determining *Rites* and *Ceremonies* in the *Church*, which are not of the *Essentials* of *Religion*, and in Matters of *Discipline* for the better *Government* of the *Church*; in these things we ought to Submit our *private Judgment*, and if ther be a *Dispute* about them, it is very Proper to ask, *who shall be Judge?* Because the *Contest* and Breach of *Unity* in the *Church* is of far more *Importance* than any of these things, let them be Determined which way it will. But in Matters of *Faith* it is quite otherwise, and there to ask, *who shall be Judge?* Is most Abhorrent, as *who shall be*

202 Of Private Judgment

be Judge, whether ther is a God or not, or a Christ? And so of other *Articles* of the *Creed*, as I have shewed you before.

God has Subjected our *Lives* and *Fortunes* to the absolute *Disposal* of *Civil Government*, because these are no Great things, and we must give them up However. And in these ther is a *Necessity* of Determining the Question, *who shall be Judge?* Without this, ther can be no End of *Civil Disputes*, and *Government* would be Impracticable; ther must be a *Last Resort* from which ther is no *Appeal*, otherwise ther would be an *Eternal* running *Round*, or a *Progressus in Infinitum*, and no *Contest* about *Civil Affairs* could ever be Determined. And ther is no *Security* in this that an *Unjust Judgment* will not be given at last; nor is that of great Moment, for, as I said, we are not much Hurt by it.

But God has taken more Care of our *Souls*, and not put our *Faith* under the *Absolute Dominion* of Any. The *Apostles* Disclaimed it, and when they *Exhorted* and *Instructed*, they said, *Not for that we have DOMINION over your FAITH, but are Helpers of your Joy.* And again, *If we or an Angel from*

ii Cor. i. 24.

from Heaven Preach any other Gospel, let him be Anathema, that is, Accursed. Gal. i. 8. And this was to be known only by private Judgment; and is a very Positive Decision for it, against Authority, of the Highest Sort possible next under God Himself.

It is this mistaken Notion of Authority which Detains you of the Church of Rome, and Shuts your Ears from Harkning to Reason. You stop us every Turn with the Authority of the Church! Nay, you bid us Deny our Reason, and our Senses too, in Obedience to the Church!

And it is this very same Mistake which Hardened the Jews against Christ, as they said to those who were Charmed with His Doctrine and had seen His Miracles, and told them, Never Man Spake like this Man, but the chief Priests, &c. Answered, Joh. vii. 48, 49.

Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him, but this People who knoweth not the Law are Cursed. Here was a full Stop to all further Enquiries concerning Him, whether He were the true Messiah or not? They must Learn this from the Church, and not Trust to their private Judgment, let the Case be never so Plain!

(XI.) And

204 Of Private Judgment

(XI.) And I cannot here but observe a Wonderful Providence in the Oeconomy of God. He might, no doubt, have so Dispos'd things if He had pleased, as that Christ should have been Received by His own, and Acknowledged by the Church. But He chose the Way, wherein the Husband-Men should Kill the Heir, and the Builders reject the Corner-Stone, that the Pride of Man might be Humbled, and our Faith stand in God alone. Christ was Denied and Persecuted by all the Powers on Earth, as well Ecclesiastical as Civil. And of His own Apostles, one Betrayed Him, another Forswore Him, all Forsook Him. He trod the Wine-Press alone, and of the People there was none with Him. And this was Prophefied of before, That He should be a Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offence to both the Houses of Israel, and that their Eyes should be Blinded that they should not Know Him when He came. As I have shewed before in the Demonstration of Christianity, p. 128, 129. And what was it Blinded them against this Full and Clear Evidence, but their Notion of the Authority of the Church! And was it not to Beat down and for ever Silence this Pretence, that

that *Christ* would not Suffer the *Church* to give *Attestation* to Him, nor Come by their *Recommendation*? Should the *Sun* borrow *Light* from the *Moon*? Yet this *Pretence* is taken up again by the *Church* of *Rome*. It never was Maintained by any but by the *Church* of the *Jews*, and of *Rome*! And we have seen strange Effects of Both!

(XII.) R. C. After all you have said, How do you know the *Canonical Book* of *Scripture* but by the *Authority* of the *Church*?

C. E. Not at all by her *Authority*, but by her *Evidence*. Ther is a great Difference, I pray you to Consider it. Ther were false *Gospels* and false *Epistles* Inscribed to several of the *Apostles*, set up by the *Hereticks* in the first Age; And they were Detected in that same Age, while the *Originals* of what the *Apostles* Wrote were still in being. But the *Hereticks* could not Produce the *Originals* of theirs, nor did their *Copies* agree with one another, as *Eusebius* tells us. And this was not Deciding the Matter by *Authority*, but by plain *Evidence* of a *Fact*, as of any other *Forgery*, or *Supposititious Writing*.

Euseb. Hist.
L. v. c. 28.

But

206 Of Private Judgment

But you State the Matter so, as if ther were a *Heap of Papers*, of many Hundred Years past, some *Genuine* and some *Spurious*, all Confusedly thrown together, and that it were left to the *Church* to *Distinguish* these, by her *Authority*, and that we were oblidge- ed so to Receive them, without knowing any more of the Matter, and had No- thing but her *Authority* to Trust to. But this, SIR, is far from being the Case. The *Canon* of the *Scripture* was Settled at the Time when it could be done by full *Evidence*, and the *Notoreity* of the thing was known to all. And we have Received it down from that Time, in *Copies* so *Universally* Spred through the *Christian* World, that it is Impossible to *Add* or *Detract* from it, without a ge- neral *Detection* of the *Forgery* by all *Churches*. And this has Preserved the *Canon* of the *New Testament* so Intire, that ther is no Difference about it be- tween *You* and *Us*, or any other *Christian* Church.

It is true indeed we Differ with you as to the *Canon* of the *Old Testament*. But we have the *Jews* on our Side for this, who never Received those *Books* we call *Apocryphal* into their *Canon*. They were

were not Wrote in their *Language*, at least most of them. And I might bring in the *Jew* again to Reason the Case with you, how you came to Understand their *Canon* better than Themselves, who were in Possession of it many Hundred Years before *Christianity*, and were so Careful as to Number the very Letters? But I will not Prolong this, nor enter into the particular *Disputes* betwixt your *Church* and ours, my Business now being only to Consider the Foundation Principle of the *Authority* of the *Church*, upon which all the Rest depend. I will only say this further as to these *Apocryphal* Books, That St. *Jerom* in his *Prologus Galeatus*, Printed before all your *Vulgar Latin Bibles* that I have seen, Excludes all these by Name out of the *Canon*, and says the *Church* did so too. And we may Suppose that so Learned a *Father*, who had himself *Translated* the *Scriptures*, knew what the *Church* Received in his Time. And it seems Strange to me that such a flagrant Testimony against you should stand in the Front of your own *Bibles*. But if you would have further Satisfaction as to this Point, I refer you to Bishop *Cosin's* Elaborate *History of the Canon of the Scriptures*, which has

208 Of Private Judgment

has not been Answered by any of your *Church* that I hear of, for it seems to Carry *Demonstration* along with it, proceeding wholly upon *Fact*, and giving *Vouchers* in Abundance. And as to the Books themselves, let any one Read the Conclusion of the Book of *Maccabees*, ii *Macc.* xv. 39, 40, and see if he can Persuade himself that such *Words* could come out of the Mouth of God!

(XIII.) But to Return. The great Cause I conceive of the *Church* of the *Jews*, and the *Church* of *Rome*, having fallen into this Mistake of their own *Absolute* and *Unlimited* AUTHORITY, and *Indefeasible* PERPETUITY, is their not Rightly Apprehending the Nature of the *Promises* which God makes to *Man*. For though they may be *Full* and *Unconditional* as Expressed in the *Words*, yet they are to be Understood with an Implied *Condition* of our *Obedience*. And we are not to think that He is Bound by His *Promise*, though we are never so *Wicked*! No. God will not thus be *Mocked*! If He has Spoken concerning a *Land* to *Pluck up* and to *Destroy*, if they *Repent*, He will also *Repent* of the *Evil*. And if He has

Jer. xviii. 7. &c.

has Promised to Build and to Plant, if they do Evil, He will Repent of the Good. See what He said to Eli the High-Priest for his not Restraining his Sons, who were Wicked in their Ministry, wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed, *i Sam. ii. 30.* that thy House, and the House of thy Father should Walk before me for Ever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that Honour me, I will Honour, and they that Despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.

God had Promised to the Children of Israel whom He brought out of Egypt, to Carry them into the Land of Canaan to Possess it. But upon their Murmuring, He Condemned them all (except Two) to Die in the Wilderness, and said, ye shall know my Breach of Promise, in the *Nam. xiv. 34.* Margin it is, the Altering of my Purposes.

Obey my Voice (says God) that I may Perform the Oath which I have Sworn unto your Fathers. *Jer. x. 4, 5.*

It would be Tedious to go through the Multitude of Texts to this Purpose. Many Promises were made to the People of Israel and to the Temple, of Perpetuity for Ever. Yet both It and They were Destroyed for their Wickedness. All which will not yet Persuade them that these Promises were Conditional. This was the Hardest

210 Of Private Judgment

Hardest Point to Gain upon them. *John* the *Baptist* began with this, to shew them the Vanity of their Hopes, in saying, we have *Abraham* to our Father. And this was what our Blessed Saviour Set forth to them in the Parable of the Vineyard and the Wicked Husband-Men. But they would not Understand. They still stuck to their own Being the only Peculium of God. They could bear Nothing against this. When our Lord told them of God's shewing to some of the Gentiles more Favour than the Israelites, in the Instances of *Naaman* the Syrian, and the Widow of *Sarepta*, they were filled with Wrath, and thrust Him out of the City, and led Him to the Brow of the Hill, that they might Cast Him down Headlong. They heard St. Paul with Attention unto this Word, of his being sent to the Gentiles, and then they Dist up their Voices, and said, Away with such a Fellow from the Earth, for it is not fit that he should Live, and they Eyed out, and Cast off their Clothes, and threw Dust into the Air. Such Transports have I seen among some of your Communion, when their Title to be the only Peculium was Questioned! And yet you have less Pretence than the Church of the Jews, for ther were many Promises made to them by Name, but not one

one to the *Church of Rome* by *Name*, nor by any *Implication* which does not depend upon great *Uncertainties* at *Best*, and must be *Resolved* wholly by *private Judgment* at last.

(XIV.) *DISSENTER*. It is now time for to me come in. I stand upon *private Judgment*. And if you *Condemn* me, you *Condemn That* too.

C. E. No doubt, *private Judgment* is often *Mistaken*. Therefore you must take *Pains* to have your *Judgment* rightly *Informed*.

Diss. Do you *Inform* me then. You have *Run down* the *Authority* of the *Church*. I see no *Authority* you have left her.

C. E. Because I do not *Allow* her an *Absolute, Unconditional, and Infallible AUTHORITY*, and that in *Matters of Faith*; you think she has no *Authority* at all.

Diss. Your 20th *Article* (of late so much *Contested*) says, she has *Authority in Controverses of Faith*.

C. E. Yes, but far from *Infallible*. You see how it is there *Limited*, not to be *Repugnant* to *Holy Scripture, &c.* She has *Authority* as a *Witness* and *Keeper* of *Holy Writ*, as the *Article* Words it.

Diss. What *Authority* is that?

C. E. The same that is *Acknowledged* in your *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. xxxi. *Ministerially to determine Controversies*

of Faith as you there Word it. But in *Regulating the Worship of God*, and in *Discipline* for the better Government of the Church, there to Determine *Authoritatively*. And this is perfectly Agreeable to our 20th Article, against which you have Wrangled perpetually, and of late have Called in the *Deists* to your Aid, at least Accepted of their Assistance in their *Priest-Craft* in *Perfection* against this 20th Article. For their *Information* therefore, and by your own *Confession*, the *Authority* of the Church stands thus; to Determine *Controversies* of Faith only *Ministerially*, as the Ordinary *Dispensers* of the Word, as *Servants* of Christ, and *Ministers* of the Gospel; not *Absolutely* and *Authoritatively*, as *Lords* of our Faith, and *Infallible Interpreters* of Scripture. And it is most Reasonable to Submit and Acquiesce in such *Determination* of the Church, except where the Case is *Notorious* and out of Doubt, and of the last Consequence, as of the Case of the *Messiah* when He came. For *Unconditional Obedience* in Matters of Faith, is Due to none but God, nor has He delegated any such Power to Men. Will it therefore follow, That He has given no Power at all to His Church?

It was a great Power was given when He said, Go ye and Teach all Nations, Baptizing them, &c. And

Matth. xxviii. 19.

And He left *Power* with them to Invest others with the same *Authority*, without which none can *Preach* the *Faith*, for *How shall they Preach, except they be Sent?* And this is an *Authority* Rom. x. 15.

relating to *Faith*. As likewise the *Power* of the *Keys*, which Implies all *Authority* of *Government*, as being the *Pillar* i Tim. iii. 15. and *Ground* of the *Faith*. And *Christ* has Promised to Ratify in *Heaven* the *Censures* of the *Church* when *Justly* Inflicted upon *Earth*.

R. C. Why do you *Limit* the *Text*? The *Words* are *General*, *Whatsoever ye shall Bind, &c.* And *Whosoever Sins ye Remit, &c.* Matth. xviii. 18.
Joh. xx. 23.

C. E. This is what I just now told you of, That you will take the *Words* of *God* without any Implied *Condition*. Yet you your selves cannot Deny but that there are *Conditions* here Implied, as of *Contrition* in the *Penitent*, &c. And if the *Censures* of the *Church* are Inflicted *Clave errante*, as you Term it, that is, not *Justly*, you say not that such *Sentence* will be *Ratified* in *Heaven*.

(XV.) R. C. *Christ* said, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Seat*, Matth. xxiii. 2, 3. all therefore *whatsoever they bid you Observe, that Observe and Do*. What *Exception* do you here find from

this Absolute Authority Recognized by Christ to be in the Church?

C. E. By this you own the Church then to have been in the Synagogue of the Scribes and Pharisees. And were they Infallible? Were all the Jews who had Believed in Christ obliged to Renounce Him, because so Commanded by these Scribes and Pharisees? But, SIR, there is not a Word of Believing in all this Text. They were only to Observe and Do what the Synagogue should Bid them. And no doubt the Condition was Implied, of such Commands being Lawful, and Agreeable to the Word of God. And this is the Full of what is meant in our Obedience to any Church or Authority upon Earth. And being Worded here to the Utmost Extent, shews how the like Expressions are to be Understood when Applied to others. This is beyond, Feed my Sheep, or Tell it to the Church; how then shall so Much be Inferred from These, when far Less is meant in more Positive and Comprehensive Words? It is said, Children Obey your Parents in all things. And if this had been said of our Obedience to the Church, it Could have meant no more than as it stands in Relation to Parents, viz. in all their Lawful Commands. And private Judgment must Determine that, in the one Case as well as in the other.

But

But since you bring this *Text* to shew the *Authority* of your *Church*, you shall have it; and take it all together, in what *Christ* says of these same *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. In the same *Discourse* where He commands this *Obedience* to be Payed them, He calls them *Blind Guides*, leading the *Blind* into the *Ditch*. He bids His *Disciples* beware of their *Doctrine*; and Charges them with having made the *Commandments* of God of none Effect through their *Traditions*, and many such like things which they did, before His Coming into the World.

Matth. xvi. 12.

Mark. vii. 13.

Now if your *Plea* should hold, of the *Church* being Transferred to the *Messiah* at His coming; yet you will be Oblidged to Maintain the *Infallibility* of the *Jewish Church* before that time. Else your *Principle* falls of the Goodness of God being Engaged to Afford Men always an *Infal-liable Guide*: And likewise your *Argument* from the *Promises* made to the *Church* of the *Jews* in the *Old Testament* of *Infallibility*, *Perpetuity*, &c. which you Quote now for your own *Church*. You have brought a very hard Task upon your selves, either to Maintain the *Infallibility* of the *Jewish Church* all along before *Christ* came, or else to Lose your own. You must Answer what I have Quoted, of the *Jews* having

216 Of Private Judgment

Rejected the Commandments of God, that they might keep their own Tradition. And consider that it takes a long Time to make a Tradition. Therefore these false Doctrines with which Christ here Charges them were of old Standing among them before He came.

Mark. vii. 5. And they called it the Tradition of their Elders, that is, of those before them, and of the Governors of their Church, called generally by the Name of their Elders.

But let us look into their former Times. We find them all Involved in the Idolatry of the Golden Calf, even Aaron the High-Priest and whatever can be called their Church, when they thought they had lost Moses, upon his Tarrying so long on the Mount. Ther is

Exod. xxxii. 1. &c. not one Exception made of any of the People who did not come in fully to this Idolatry. And how frequently afterwards did they Relaps into this Sin?

Daniel. ix. 11. Daniel Charges it upon all Israel, as well as upon their Kings, Princes, &c. All the Chief of the Priests.

Jer. xxvi. 8. 11. They Persecuted their own Prophets, and at the Instigation of their Priests. Who likewise Persuaded them to ask Barabbas, and Destroy Jesus

Mat. xxvii. 20.

Jesus

Jesus. It was their whole Sanhedrim, the Chief Priests and all the Council. And it was upon the same Principle, and their Assurance of the Infallibility of their Church, for, said they, the Law shall not perish from the Priest. Therefore, Let us smite Jeremiah, and let us not give heed to any of his Words. Which of the Prophets, says St. Stephen, have not your Fathers Persecuted? Our Saviour told them, your Fathers killed the Prophets and ye Build their Sepulchers; and say, if we had been in the Days of our Fathers, we would not have been Partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be Witnesses unto your selves, that ye are the Children of them who killed the Prophets. Fill ye up then the Measure of your Fathers. Yet they could not see the Fallibility of their Fathers; nor their own, when they were filling up their Measure, in Persecuting the Messiah, as their Fathers had the Prophets. But they still Stuck to their Infallibility, That the Law could not Perish from the Priest. And which is more Wonderful, you still Stick to their Infallibility, because you cannot otherwise Support your own! And you Quote the Promises made to Them, as securing You from Fallibility! Thus they are your Fathers as well as of the Jews, and we may say to you, as Christ said to the Jews, Your Fathers killed the Prophets, &c. Nay, we may say more to You, That Your Fathers killed the Messiah, and yet you still Maintain their Infallibility!

But while Christ Exposed the Fallibility of the Church, He still Supported her Authority, by owning that the Scribes and Pharisees Sat in Moses's Seat.

And

And this Determines the *Limits* of our *Submission* to any *Authority*, viz. To *Observe* and *Do* whatsoever they *Command* us (that is *Lawful*) let them be never so *Wicked*, as *Wicked* as these *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, whom in the same Chapter *Christ* calls *Serpents*, a *Generation* of *Vipers*, and *Children* of *Hell*. But to beware of their *Doctrine*, not to think our selves Oblidg'd to give the inward *Assent* of our *Minds* and to *Believe* all that they shall *Require* of us as of *Faith*. For this is the most *Desperate* Condition any mortal Man can be in. And if our *private Judgment* lead us to this, ther is no other Instance in the World wherein it can so *Fatally* Deceive us!

The next to this, is the Condition of you *Dissenters*, who instead of *Observing* and *Doing* whatsoever is *Commanded* you, though it be *Lawful*; will do nothing you are *Bidden*; and for that very Reason, because you are *Bidden*; infomuch that what you your selves own to be *Lawful*, and *Indifferent*, and that you might do it of your own Head; you think it becomes *Sinful*, meerly because *Injoined* by your *Lawful Superiours*! For then it is an *Encroachment* upon your *Christian Liberty*! This is the *Spirit* of *Contradiction*, it is *Crossness* for *Crossness* Sake! Of which you would soon be *Sensible* if it were in your own *Children*. If one of them should say to you, I would have done what you *Bid* me, but now will not, because you *Bid* me.

Upon the whole, I allow the *Church* to be the *Judge* of *Faith*, the only and *supreme* Judge of it upon *Earth*. As in all *Civil Government* ther is a *last Resort* which is *Supreme* and *Unaccountable* to *Man*; but ther is an *Appeal* to

God

God, from whom Both derive their Authority. But the Church of Rome will not Suffer me to Appeal from Her to God, no not in my own Mind. St. Peter owned the Authority of the Church of the Jews, and called their Sanhedrim, the Rulers of the People, the Elders of Israel, and the Builders of the Church; but yet he said to them, whether it be Right in the Sight of God, to Harken unto you more than unto God, Judge ye. He spoke of the Messiah the Corner-Stone whom they had Rejected, and therefore he Appealed from the Church to God, in this Supreme and most Fundamental Point of Faith.

Act. iv. 8.

Ver. 11.

Ver. 19.

Christ came with an Evidence and Authority than Superior to that of the Church. He said, I receive not testimony from Man — The Father Himself hath born Witness of me. And indeed to shew Christ by the Church, would be Lighting a Candle to see the Sun.

Joh. v. 34.

ver. 37.

The Church is the Interpreter of Scripture, as the Judges are of the Law. And they have Authority so to Interpret, and they Judge Authoritatively. Yet they are but the Ordinary Dispensers of the Law, to which an ordinary Interpretation of the Law is Necessary. But the ultimate Interpretation of the Law is only in the Legislative Authority, according to the Maxim, Cujus est Condere, ejus est et Interpretari, that is, It belongs to the same Power which Enacts to Interpret. For the Makers of the Law best know their own Meaning. Thus the Church is the ordinary Dispenser, and so far the Interpreter of Scripture. But the ultimate Decision is in God, and we may still Appeal to Him. And must make Use of

our

our own private Judgment for our Understanding it, and Governing our Practice accordingly, in the great Points of Faith and Worship.

(XVI.) Let us come to a Test in this Matter. And it is very short. Christ says to the People,

Joh. v. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which Testify of me — And how is it,*

that ye do not Discern this Time? (that is, of the Coming of the Messiah) Yea, and

Luk. xii. 56, 57. why even of your own selves Judge ye not what is Right? The Vulgar has it, Hoc autem

Tempsus quomodo non Probatis? Why do you not Examine and Prove whether this be the Time or not, by the Signs which the Scriptures have Testified of it? As you Discern the Weather by the natural Signs which Precede; the Comparison our Saviour there Uses. Ye can Discern the Face

Matth. xvi. 3. of the Sky, but can ye not Descern the Signs of the Times? that is, When

the Messiah should Come, which are as Plain as the other, that ye need not go to any Body to know it. Quid autem et a vobis Ipsi non Judicatis? You may Judge it of your own Selves.

In answer to all which says Authority, Nay, but has the Church Determined it? Have any of

Joh. vii. 48. *the Rulers or Pharisees believed on Him? But this People who knoweth not the Law*

are Cursed. Are not they Cursed who Depart from the Church, and will not Believe Her?

Who take upon Themselves to Know the Law, and to Interpret it, contrary to the Judgment of

the Church! They set up private Judgment against Authority! And I must leave it to every Man's

private Judgment to Judge of all that I have said. For this is the only general Rule by which

God will Judge all Men. It is a Presumptuous Argument

gument to say, that *God* is Oblidged to give every Man an outward *Guide*, when He has left the greatest Part of the World, without it. Was *Abraham* given as a *Guide* to all the Word, who was known only to a few Neighbours? The *Law* was given only to the *Jews*, and the *Gentiles* were not to be Judged by it. For as many as Sin without the *Law*, shall be Judged without the *Law*. And not Believing the Gospel is a *Condemnation* to those only to whom it is *Preached*. Go ye and *Preach*—He that *Believeth* not—that is, what you *Preach*. So that *Rejecting* the Gospel was the *Crime*, when it was offered with full *Evidence*. For this was *Despising* the *Goodness* of *God* offer'd to us. But for a general *Guide* to *Mankind*, In the beginning *God* Created *Man*, and left him in the *Hand* of his own *Council*. He set before him *Life* and *Death*, *Blessing* and *Cursing* for him to *Chuse*. And *God* will *Bless* or *Curse* him, according to what He has set before him, whether by *Revelation*, or by his own natural *Reason* only. And who is *Judge* of this? None but *God*, who only knows the *Sincerity* of any Man's *Intentions*, and what *Endeavours* he has used towards the *Right Informing* of his *Judgment*. And where ther is *Use* for a *Guide*, Man has no other way to *Determine* himself but by his *private Judgment*.

(XVII.) Now to *Apply* this as to our own immediate *Concerns* at *Present*. I suppose a Man on his *Road* to such a *Place*, and coming where ther are three or four different *Ways*, he knows not which to *Chuse*. But he finds there several *Guides* standing who all *Pretend* to be *Appointed*

Rom. ii. 12.

Mark. xvi.

15. 16.

Ecclus. xv. 14.

Deut. xxi. 19.

ed

ed *Guides* of that *Road*, and offer their Service, with equal *Assurance*, each saying, that the *Way* he Points is the *Right*, and none other. But the *Traveller* has a *Cart* or *Plan* of the *Way* in his Hand, which all the *Guides* allow to be *Just* and *Right*, and would have him Walk by it. Only one tells him, he may Mistake his *Plan*, therefore desires he would give it up to him; and moreover that he should be *Blind-folded*, because otherwise he might be Disputing the *Way*, which would Retard their Journey; and besides Imply'd a *Distrust* of his *Guide*. But another *Guide* tells him he should keep his *Plan* in his Hand, and he would give him leave to Examine every *Step* he Led him by the *Plan*, and then his own *Eyes* should be *Judge* whether he Led him *Right* or not? And he would not desire it should be left in his Power to Lead him over a *Precipice* with his *Eyes* shut.

The Holy *Scriptures* are the *Plan*, and the *Church* of *Rome* takes them from the *People* (lest they Dispute about it) and Requires them to Trust *Absolutely* and *Blindly* to her *Guidance*.

The *Church* of *England* shews her *Commission* to be a *Guide* upon this *Road* to *Heaven*, Derived by *Succession* from the *Apostles*, with a *Competent*, though not an *Infallible Authority*.

The *Dissenters* have no *Commission* nor *Succession* to shew, they have Thrust themselves as *Guides* upon this *Road*, of their own Heads, not above 150 Years ago, in utter *Contempt* and *Opposition* to all the *Guides* of God's Appointment from the Days of the *Apostles*. And they have no *Authority* at all, either to *Preach* the *Word*, or to *Sign* and *Seal* the *Covenant* which God has made with *Man*, in the Holy *Sacraments* of His *Institution*

tution, nor to Bless in His Name. This Honour they have taken to themselves, which the Apostle says, *No Man can take to himself, but he that is Called of God, as was Aaron.* Heb. V. 4.

And now, since God has Appointed His Guides to Lead us with our Eyes open, and not to take from us the Use of our private Judgment, that is, of our Understanding, without which we could not be Men: Since this is all the Security of which we are Capable in this Frail State; and to Strain it Higher, would be to Lose it all: Let us not be taken with that Presumptuous Sophistry of Infallibility, which Hardened the Jews against their Messiah; Unanswerable by the Church of Rome, and hides Repentance from her Eyes!

I have given before a Demonstration of the Truth of the Holy Scriptures, and of Christianity, without Touching upon the Authority of the Church (only they come in for their Share of the Evidence, as they are Part of Mankind) to shew that our Faith stands not upon the Precarious Foot of the Authority of any Church, but upon such Evidence as is Agreeable to the common Sense of Mankind; and which they cannot Deny, without throwing off all the Certainty they can have in any Facts whatsoever that have been done in the World. But if you Argue from the Authority of the Church, you Rivet every one in his own Way; for you must suppose that another has as good an Opinion of his Church, as you have of yours. And the Jew has moreover the same Promises for his Church; which the Church of Rome Alledges for her Infallibility and Perpetuity.

And the Jewish Church was Uncontestably in Possession of all these Promises, for many Ages together, because she was the True and only Church of God

God upon the Face of the Earth, from Moses to Christ.

Therefore Christianity must have such a Foundation to stand upon, as will not give Equal (and Greater) Advantage to Judaism; else Christianity cannot be the Truth, and her Reformation was Unjust against the Church in Possession; and we ought to Return to Her who was undoubtedly the Mother-Church, by the Confession of all the Christians themselves. And she still Complains, and asks the Question, who was or ought to be Judge, betwixt Her and her Rebellious Sons who Broke off from her, and set up a New and opposite Communion against Her, though they

Ast. vi. 7. were a great Company of her Priests,
xxi. 20. and Myriads of her People? Yet they were all Mised, if our Faith stands upon Church Authority.

This is a Hard saying to many. And I will retract it, when any one shall have the Charity to shew me my Error.

But I have not said this, till I had first Established the Truth of Christianity upon another Foundation, to which neither Jew nor Gentile can have any Pretence. I have shewed the way to Christ by His own Glory, to which as nothing can Add, to no other Truth can Imitate, nor Authority give Sanction to it, except that only of His Father; John 4. 41. for He receiveth not Honour from Men.

If any Answer me, I desire him first to Join with me in this Prayer, that it would please God to Strengthen those that are in the Truth, and to Convince those that are in Error. Towards which I have Cast in my Mite.

Quod faustum saxit Deus

FINIS

MUSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM